KX
M
580

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

Heinemann's Pocket Editions

F'cap 8vo., CLOTH 2s. net, or LEATHER 3s. net, each volume

Edmund Gosse	*Father and Son*
R. L. Stevenson	*St. Ives*
R. L. Stevenson	*The Ebb Tide*
Ivan Turgenev	*Rudin—A House of Gentlefolk—On the Eve—Fathers and Children—Smoke—Virgin Soil (2 vols.)—A Sportsman's Sketches (2 vols.)—Dream Tales and Prose Poems—The Torrents of Spring, &c.—A Lear of the Steppes, &c.—The Diary of a Superfluous Man, &c.—A Desperate Character, &c.—The Jew, &c.*

Heinemann's Popular 2/- net Novels

Robert Hichens	*Bella Donna*
Willa S. Cather	*Alexander's Bridges*
Hodgson Burnett... ...	*The Shuttle*
Eleanor Mordaunt ...	*A Ship of Solace*
Flora Annie Steel ...	*The Gift of the Gods*
Duncan Schwann... ...	*The Book of a Bachelor*

Heinemann's Library of 1/- net Novels

E. H. Abbott	*Molly Make-believe*
E. F. Benson	*The Blotting Book*
E. F. Benson	*The Babe B.A.*
J. Conrad	*The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*
S. Crane	*The Red Badge of Courage*
F. Danby	*Baccarat*
Mrs. H. E. Dudeney ...	*The Maternity of Harriott Wicken*
Mrs. H. E. Dudeney	*The Orchard Thief*
J. Galsworthy ...	*The Country House*
P. Gibbs	*The Street of Adventure*
Baroness von Hutten ...	*Our Lady of the Beeches*
Baroness von Hutten ...	*Pam*
Baroness von Hutten ...	*What Became of Pam*
J. London	*The Sea-Wolf*
J. H. McCarthy	*If I were King*
Lloyd Osbourne	*The Adventurer*
Sir G. Parker	*The Weavers*
F. C. Price	*Lord Kentwell's Love Affair*
E. Robins	*The Magnetic North*
Sybil Spottiswoode ...	*Marcia in Germany*
H. de V. Stacpoole ...	*Toto*
Charles Turley	*Godfrey Marten, School-boy*
H. G. Wells	*The Time Machine*

The Empire Library of Standard Works

Published for Sale in the British Colonies and India only.

Rear Admiral Colomb and others ...	*The Great War of* 189—.
Sir Charles Dilke and others ...	*Sixty Years of Empire*, 1837-1897
S. J. Du Toit	*Rhodesia, Past and Present*
Paul Gaulot	*A Friend of the Queen*
W. Hirsch	*Genius and Degeneration*
Frederic Masson	*Napoleon and the Fair Sex*
Max Nordau	*Paradoxes*
Max Nordau	*Conventional Lies*
H. C. Thomson	*The Chitral Campaign*
Albert D. Vandam ...	*Undercurrents of the Second Empire*
K. Waliszewski	*The Romance of an Empress*
K. Waliszewski	*The Story of a Throne*
Lieut.-General Windham	*The Crimean Diary and Letters of*
Napoleon I.	*New Letters of*

Heinemann's 7d. net Novels

Hall Caine	*The Bondman*
Hall Caine	*The Scapegoat*
R. L. Stevenson	*The Ebb-Tide*
Jack London	*The Call of the Wild*
H. G. Wells	*The War of the Worlds*
Robert Hichens	*Flames*
E. L. Voynich	*The Gadfly*
Richard Harding Davis ...	*In the Fog*
Richard Harding Davis ...	*Soldiers of Fortune*
Maxwell Grey	*The Last Sentence*
D. D. Wells	*Her Ladyship's Elephant*
Joseph Conrad	*Typhoon*
Harold Frederic	*The Return of the O'Mahony*

RX-M-580

'HAIL AND FAREWELL!'

'HAIL, AND FAREWELL!'

A TRILOGY

I. AVE

II. SALVE

III. VALE [*In preparation*

'HAIL AND FAREWELL!'

II

SALVE

BY

GEORGE MOORE

90315

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1912

(TOD
DOT
Mouhui
(10315

Copyright, London, 1912

ERRATA :

Page 170 *Béarnaise.*

„ 203 *Je ne trouve dans ses oeuvres que vapeur et tumulte.*

Les Goncourt.

I

AS I returned home after the dinner at Tonks' (it is mentioned in the last chapter of the volume entitled *Ave*), my departure from London seemed to become suddenly imminent. I did not know if I should leave London in a week or in six weeks, only that my departure could not be much longer delayed; and while passing through Grosvenor Gardens, I began to wonder by what means the Destiny I had just heard would pull me out of my flat in Victoria Street. Two years or eighteen months of my lease still remained; this lag end had been advertised, but no desirable tenant had presented himself, and it did not seem to me that I could go away to Dublin leaving the flat empty, taking with me all my pictures and furniture. A house in Dublin would be part of my equipment as a Gaelic League propagandist, and it would cost me a hundred pounds a year; houses in Dublin are rarely in good repair, some hundreds might have to be spent upon it; and falling into an arm-chair, I asked myself where all this money was to come from, my will receding. It is always at ebb when the necessity arises of writing to my banker to ask him how many hundred pounds are between me and destitution. We are but a heredity. My father was a spend-

thrift and hated accounts; to me accounts are as mysterious as Chinese, and curiously repellent. We are the same man with a difference; the pain that his pecuniary embarrassment caused him seems to have inflicted me with such a fear of money that I am the most economical of men, as my agent said when he visited me in the Temple. His remark that very few would be content to live in a cock-loft and my lady's objection to the three flights of stairs, tempted me out of the Temple, and now hatred of the Boer War was forcing me into what seemed a gulf of ruin.

'Two hundred and fifty a year I shall be paying for houses,' I said, 'and yet I must go; even if I am to end my days in the workhouse I must go, even though to engage in Gaelic League propaganda may break up the mould of my mind. The mould of my mind doesn't interest me any longer, it is an English mould; better break it up at once and have done with it.'

My thoughts faded away into a vague meditation in which ideas did not shape themselves, and next morning I rose from my bed undecided whether I should go or stay, but knowing all the while that I was going. It was a queer feeling, day passing over day, and myself saying to myself, 'I am twelve hours nearer departure than I was yesterday,' yet having no idea how I was going to be freed from my flat, but certain that something would come to free me. And the something that came was the Westminster Trust, a Company that had been formed for the purpose of acquiring property in Victoria Street.

It had been creeping up from Westminster for some time past, absorbing house after house, turning the grey austere residential mansions built in 1830 into shops. It had reached within a few doors of me about the time of my landlord's death, and, as soon as his property passed into the hands of the Trust, notice was served upon the tenants that their leases would not be renewed. One lease, that of a peaceable general officer who lived above my head and never played the piano, expired about that time, and as arrangements could not be made for turning his flat at once into offices it was let, temporarily, to a foreign financier, who demanded more light. The extra windows that were put in to suit his pleasure and convenience seemed to the company's architect such an improvement that the company offered to put extra windows into my rooms free of cost.

'But don't you see that if two windows be put in, the present admirable relation of wall space to window will be destroyed?'

'Light, after all——'

'You see,' I said, 'I engaged those rooms because I believed that they would afford me the quiet necessary for the composition of books, but for the last three weeks I haven't heard the sweet voice of a silent hour. Have you an ear for music? Tell me, if you have, if a silent hour is not comparable to a melody by Mozart? You live in a quiet suburban neighbourhood, I'm sure, and can tell me. All the beautiful peace of Peckham is in your face.'

The manager regretted that the improvements over my head had caused me inconvenience, and he suggested putting me upon half-rent until these

were completed; a surprisingly generous offer, so thought I at the time; but very soon I discovered that the reduction of my rent gave him all kinds of rights, including the building of a wall depriving my pantry of eight or nine inches of light, and the chipping away of my window-sills. The news that I was about to lose my window-sills brought me out of my bedroom in pyjamas, and, throwing up the window, I got out hurriedly and seated myself on the sill, thinking that by so doing I could defy the workmen. 'Bill, drop yer 'ammer on his finger-nails.' 'Better wait and see 'ow long 'e'll stand this fine frosty morning in his pi-jamas.' The wisdom of this workman inspired my servant to cry to me to come in. We both feared pneumonia, but if I did not dress myself very quickly, the workmen would have knocked away the window-sill. It was a race between us, and I think that half the sill was gone when I was partially dressed, so I seated myself on the last half.

'Let him bide,' cried one workman to his mate who was threatening my fingers with the hammer; and they continued their improvements about my windows, filling my rooms with dust and noise. I know not how it started, but a tussle began between me and one of the stone-cutters. 'We'll see what the magistrate will have to say about this bloody assault,' said the man as he climbed down the ladder, and when I had finished my dressing I went to my solicitor, who seemed to look upon the struggle on the scaffolding as very serious. His application for redress was answered by a letter saying that if a summons were issued against the

Company, a cross-summons would be issued against me for assault on one of the workmen. A civil action, the solicitor said, was my remedy; and I should have gone on with this if the Company had not expressed a good deal of regret when the tradesmen engaged in laying down a parquet floor for the financier brought down my dining-room ceiling with a crash. The director sent men at once to sweep up the litter, and he ordered his new tenant, the financier, to restore the ceiling; but my solicitor advised me to refuse the tradesmen admission, and by doing so I found that I had again put myself in the wrong; the ceiling was put up at my expense after a long interval during which I dined in the drawing-room. My solicitor's correspondence with the Company did not procure me any special terms; the Company merely repeated an offer they had previously made, which was to buy up the end of my lease for £100, a very inadequate compensation, it seemed to me, for the annoyance I had endured; but as I felt that my solicitor could not cope with the Company, I came gradually to the conclusion that I had better accept the £100. It would pay for the removal of all my furniture and pictures to Dublin, leaving something over for the house which I would have to hire and at once, for the offer of the Company was subject to my giving up possession at the end of the month.

I ordered my trunk to be packed that evening, and next morning was at the house-agent's office in Grafton Street; and while the clerk made out a long list of houses for me I told him my requirements. The houses in Merrion Square were too

large for a single man of limited income; I had lived with my mother in one when boycotting brought me back from France; the houses in Stephen's Green are as fine, but even if one could have been gotten at a reasonable rental, Stephen's Green did not tempt me, my imagination turning rather to a quiet, old-fashioned house with a garden situated in some sequestered, half-forgotten street in which old ladies live—pious women who would pass my window every Sunday morning along the pavement on their way to church. The house-agent did not think he had exactly the house, street, and the inhabitants I described upon his books, but there was a house he thought would suit me in Upper Mount Street. I remembered the street dimly; a chilly street with an uninteresting church at the end of it. A bucolic relation had taken a house in Upper Mount Street in the 'eighties and had given parties with a view to ridding himself of two uninteresting sisters-in-law, but the experiment had failed. So I knew what the houses in Upper Mount Street were like—ugly, common, expensive. Why trouble to visit them? All the same, I visited two or three, and from the doorstep of one I caught sight of Mount Street Crescent, bending prettily about a church — about a Protestant church. But there were no bills in any window, and the jarvey was asked why he didn't take me to Lower Mount Street.

'Because,' he said, 'all the houses there are lodging-houses,' and he turned his horse's head and drove me into a delightful draggle-tailed end of the town, silhouetting charmingly, I remembered, on the

evening sky, for I had never failed to admire Baggot Street when I visited Dublin. There is always something strangely attractive in a declining neighbourhood, and thinking of the powdered lackeys that must have stood on steps that now a poor slavey washes, I began to dream. The house that I had been directed to was no doubt a fine one, but its fate is declension, for it lives in my memory not by marble chimneypieces nor Adams ceilings, but by the bite of the most ferocious flea that I ever met, caught from the caretaker, no doubt, at the last moment, for I was on the car before he nipped me in the middle of the back, 'exactly,' I said, 'where I can't scratch,' and from there he jumped down upon my loins and nipped me again and again, until I arrived at the Shelbourne, where I had to strip naked to discover him.

'If the Creator of fleas had not endowed them with a passion for whiteness, humanity would perish,' I muttered, descending the stairs.

'Are you after catching him, sir?' the jarvey asked.

'Yes, and easily, for he was drunk with my blood as you might be upon John Jameson on Saturday night,' and we drove away to Fitzwilliam Square.

The houses there are large and clean, but the rents were higher than I wished to pay, and it did not seem to me that I should occupy an important enough position in the Square. 'Something a little more personal,' I said to myself, and drove away to Leeson Street: a repetition of Baggot Street, decrepit houses that had once sheltered an aristocracy, now falling into the hands of nuns and lodging-house keepers. It was abandoned for Harcourt

Street. The trams screech as they pass up that street, and despite the attraction of some magnificent areas and lamp-posts with old lanterns, I decided that I would not live in Harcourt Street and returned to the agent who had already begun to think of me as a difficult client. He produced another list and next day I visited Pembroke Road and admired the great flights of granite steps that lead to the doorways, down which a man might easily break his leg. 'If nothing else the architects of the eighteenth century were sober men,' I said.

The houses seemed to bespeak a wife and family so emphatically, that I drove to Clyde Road. It seemed too pompous and suburban for me, 'a society of distillers and brewers. Does any other trade prosper in Ireland?' I asked myself as the car stopped somewhere in the Waterloo Road, a long, monotonous road, but with some pretty houses and gardens, connecting Pembroke Road with Upper Leeson Street, but unconnected, it seemed to me, with my mission to Ireland; and again we drove away and visited some shabby-genteel villas in Castlewood Avenue; after that we turned up Rathmines Road and into Clonskeagh, where there were some pleasant houses, but none to let. After that it seemed to me that I discovered myself in a desolate region which the jarvey told me was Clondalkin, and we followed a lonely road that seemed to lead me away from all human habitation, right into the heart of the country.

'But you see,' I said to the driver, 'I'm looking for a house in the town.'

'It's to The Moat that we're going.'

'The Moat?'

In about another half-hour our horse stopped before a drawbridge, which very probably could not be lifted any longer. 'But it would be a wonderful thing,' I said, 'to live in a house with a drawbridge. If it were lifted my friends would know that I was composing, and about tea-time it would be let down for them to cross into the moated grange. A picturesque existence mine would be in this house,' I said, while following the caretaker from room to room, dreaming a life which I knew would never be mine. About a thousand pounds, she said, would make the place quite comfortable, and I answered that The Moat appealed to me in many ways, but that I had not come to Ireland in search of a picturesque residence, but in the hope of reviving the language of the tribe that used to come down from the rim of blue hills that could be seen from the windows enclosing the plain, to invade Dublin and to be repulsed by different garrisons of the Pale. One was no doubt ensconced here, and I drove away through the empty fields, merged in the cold spring twilight, in which lamb bleated after ewe, thinking of the house that I had visited high up in the Dublin mountains many years ago, Mount Venus, wondering whether it would suit me better to live there than to live at The Moat, 'for it seems,' I said to myself, 'that I shall have to live in one or the other. There doesn't seem to be any other house to let in Dublin City.'

The lamps were being lit in the streets when we returned, and the house-agent's clerk listened to the tale of my wasted day

'The houses you sent me to are all very dull and commonplace—all except The Moat, and several hundred pounds would have to be spent upon it.'

'Two hundred?'

'A thousand at least to make it habitable, and it is too far for the Gaelic League to come out to see me.'

The clerk searched his book and gave me another list of houses, and I promised that I would visit them all.

'But I don't believe that there are any houses suited to my requirements: a dining-room, where I can receive ten or a dozen people to dinner, a well-lighted drawing-room, for my pictures must be considered, a couple of bedrooms, and a couple of servants' rooms. Surely you can discover that for me?'

'We ought to be able to do that,' the clerk replied, and again he searched the book. A few more addresses were added to the list.

'I'll try these to-morrow,' I said, and, leaving the office, I followed the pavement along Trinity College Gardens, my feet taking me instinctively to Æ, who settles everybody's difficulties and consoles the afflicted, 'and who needs greater consolation than I do now?'

'If I don't find a house,' I said to him, 'in Dublin, I shall have to return to that Inferno which is London,' and I gave him a description of Mafeking night and other nights. 'There are no houses, Æ, to let. I've searched everywhere and can find nothing but The Moat, and Mount Venus, no doubt, is still vacant, but it's a good five miles distant from

Ranfarnham, and you won't be able to come to see me very often. If you weren't in Dublin perhaps my instincts would have led me to France.'

Æ's grey eyes lit up with a kindly, witty smile.

'Nature,' he said, 'has given you energy, vitality, and perseverance, my dear Moore, but she has denied you the gift of patience, and patience above all things is necessary when seeking for a house.'

'But I've searched Merrion Square, Fitzwilliam Square, Harcourt Street, and many a suburb.'

Another smile kindled in his eyes, and he listened, though my story was a long one, and there were at the time three bank managers waiting to receive instructions from him regarding the repayment of certain loans. Æ gets through more work than any other ten men in Dublin, and perhaps for that very reason he has always time for everybody, and I noticed that the anxious typist with a sheaf of letters in her hand did not distract his attention from me; he dismissed her, but without abruptness, and came down to the door refusing to believe my story that it would be impossible for me to find a house in Dublin.

'I will see what can be done for you,' he said, and his voice encouraged me as it encourages everybody. For two days I did not hear from him, and on the third morning, as I was asking myself if it would be worth while to hire another car and go forth again to hunt through Mountjoy Square and Rutland Square where the aristocracy before the Union had built their mansions, the porter came to tell me that a gentleman wanted to see me. It was Æ. He had come to tell me that he had found me a house.

'I don't believe it. I have tried for a house all over Dublin. House or no house, I shall have the pleasure of your company.' My stick went up, and I called out 'car'; but the house he was taking me to was in the centre of Dublin, within a few minutes walk of Stephen's Green; the ideal residence, he said, for a man of letters; one of five little eighteenth-century houses shut off from the thoroughfare, and with an orchard opposite which might be mine for two or three pounds a year if I knew how to bargain with the landlord.

'Æ, is this a vision, a dream-tale, a story you have written or would like to write?'

At that moment we turned a corner and came into sight of an old iron gateway; behind it were the five eighteenth-century houses . . . and the orchard! But to the houses first. Five modest little houses, but every one with tall windows; a single window above the area, no doubt the dining-room, and above it a pair of windows with balconies; behind them were the drawing-rooms, and the windows above these were the bedroom windows.

'Not a single pane of plate-glass in the house, Æ! The room above mine is the cook's room. If there are some back rooms?'

Æ assured me that the houses were deep and had several back rooms; the drawing-rooms were large and lofty, and, as well as he remembered, the back windows in the dining and drawing-rooms overlooked the convent garden.

'I might have tramped round Dublin for a month and found nothing; whereas, in three days you have

found the house that suits me. Tell me how you did it.'

'Number 3 was the home of the Theosophical Society, and I thought one of the houses in the street might be vacant. I remember, while editing the *Review*, I used to envy those that had the right to walk in the orchard.'

'And now you can walk there whenever you please, and dine with me under that apple-tree, Æ, if your Irish summers are warm enough.'

'But you haven't seen the house yet.'

'I don't want to see the house until my furniture is in it, Æ. I'm no judge of unfurnished houses.'

But in spite of my remonstrance Æ insisted on ringing the bell, and while he was making inquiries about the state of the roof and the kitchen flue, I was upstairs admiring marble mantelpieces of no mean design, and cottages that the back windows overlooked.

'Æ, I beseech you to leave off talking about boilers and cisterns and all such tiresome things. Come upstairs at once and see the dear little slum, and the two washerwomen in it. I wish we could hear what they're saying.'

'One does hear some bad language sometimes,' the caretaker murmured, turning her head away.

'I'm sure they blaspheme splendidly. Blasphemy is the literature of Catholic countries. Æ, what an inveterate mystic you are, as practical as St. Teresa; whereas, I am content if the windows and mantelpieces are eighteenth-century. Don't let the slum trouble you, my good woman. A man of letters never objects to a slum. He sharpens his pen there.'

'The convent garden, sir, on the right——'

'Yes, I see, and a great many night-shirts out drying.'

'No, sir, the nun's underwear.'

'Better and better. Into what Eden have you led me, Æ? Who is the agent of this Paradise? Is his name Peter?'

'No, sir; Mr. Thomas Burton.'

'And his address?'

'He lives at the Hill, Wimbledon. The landlord lives in Wicklow.'

'How extraordinary! The landlord of an Irish property living in Ireland and the agent in London. Shall I have to go back to England and interview this agent? Æ, I can't go back.'

'You won't be quit of England until your affairs are settled.'

'But I can't go back.'

Æ smiled so kindly that I half forgot my anger, and my impulsiveness began to amuse me.

'You're always right, Æ.'

'Don't say so, for there's nobody so boring——

'As the righteous man. . . . But come into the garden, where we shall dine, I hope, often. A horrible wilderness it seems at present, hen-coops; but these things can be removed.' Æ took out his watch, and said that he must be getting back to his office. 'Damn that office!' I answered. It seemed to me that all my life was on my lips that afternoon, and I begged him to stay. He said he couldn't, and bade me good-bye quickly. 'But, Æ, I'm going——'

Whither I was going that evening it is impossible

to remember at this distance of time; all I know for certain is that at some assembly of people, men and women, not at the Mansion House nor in the Rotunda, therefore in some private house (I am sure it was in some private house, for I remember gaseliers, silk cushions, ladies' necks) I rushed up to Hyde, both hands extended, my news upon my lips.

'Hyde, I've come over; it's all settled. I've been driving about Dublin for a week without finding a house, and would have had to go away, leave you—think of it?—if Æ hadn't come to my help in the nick of time. He has found me such a beautiful house, Hyde, where you'll come to dine, and where, perhaps, we'll be able to talk together in Irish, for I am determined to learn the language.'

'You don't mean it? You don't tell me that you've left London for good? You're only joking,' and he laughed that vacant little laugh which is so irritating.

'But tell me, are you advancing?'

'We're getting on finely. If we could only get the Intermediate——'

'The Intermediate is most important; but what I want to know is if I shall be able to help you.'

'You've done a great deal already, but——'

'But what?'

'Your book *Parnell and His Island* will go against you with the League.'

'I should have thought the League was here to accept those that are willing to help Ireland to recover her language, and not to bother about my past.'

'That's the way we are over here,' he said, and again I had to endure his irritating little laugh.

'But I'm thinking. . . . The League might be reconciled to your book if you were to issue it with a subtitle—*Parnell and His Island,* or *Ireland Without Her Language.* I was reading your book the other day, and do you know I wouldn't say that it wasn't your best book?'

'It is mere gabble,' I answered, 'and cannot be re-issued.'

'You can't think that?' And dropping a hint that I might be more useful to them in England than in Ireland, he turned away to tell dear Edward that he was delighted to see him. 'Now have you come up from the West for the meeting? You don't tell me so? I don't believe you.' Edward re-assured him. 'And your friend, George Moore, has come over from London; and with you both to back the League——'

'How are you, George? I heard you had arrived.'

'What, already!'

'Father Dineen saw you; I met him in Kildare Street this afternoon and he told me to tell you that the Keating Branch were saying that you're coming over here to write them up in the English papers.'

'You start your rumours very quickly in Dublin,' I answered angrily, 'and a stupider one I never heard. I don't write for the papers; even if I did, the Keating Branch—I know nothing about it. Hyde, I wish you would use your influence to stop——'

'I was just telling him that he should re-issue *Parnell and His Island* with a subtitle *Ireland Without Her Language.* Now, what do you think? We're all very anxious to hear what you think, Martyn.'

'It would have been much better if he had never written that book. I told him so at the time. I have always told you, George, that I understand Ireland. I mayn't understand England——'

'But what do you mean when you say that you understand Ireland?'

Yeats joined our group, and when Edward said that I had decided to come to live in Dublin he tried a joke, but it got lost in the folds of his style, and he looked at Hyde and at Martyn disconsolate. MacNeill, the Vice-President of the Gaelic League, sidled through the crowd—an honest fellow with a great deal of brown beard. But I couldn't get him to express any opinion regarding my coming, or the view that the League would take of it.

'But your subscription will be received gratefully,' he said, moving away to avoid further interrogation.

'Money,' I answered, 'is always received with gratitude, but I've come to work for the League as well as to subscribe to it, and shall be glad to hear what kind of work you propose to put me to. Would you care to send me to America to collect funds? What do you think? A Gaelic League missionary?'

MacNeill answered that if I went to America and collected money the League would be glad to receive it; but he didn't think that the League would send me over as its representative. They would be glad, however, to receive some journalistic help from me. One of the questions that was engaging the League's attention at the present time was how to improve *The Claidheam Soluis*, and he

suggested that I should call upon the Editor at my convenience. The last words 'at my convenience' seemed unnecessary, for had I not come to Dublin to serve the Gaelic League?

Next morning, in great impatience, I sought the offices of the Gaelic League, and after many inquiries of the passers-by, discovered the number hidden away in a passage, and then the offices themselves at the top of a dusty staircase. An inscription in a strange language was assuring, and a memory of the County of Mayo in my childhood told me that the syllables that bade me enter were Gaelic and not German. A couple of rough-looking men, peasants, no doubt, native Irish speakers, sat on either side of a large table with account books before them, and in answer to my question if I could see the Editor, one of them told me that he was not in at present.

'But you speak Irish?' I said.

Both of them nodded, and, forgetful of the business upon which I had come, I began to question them as to their knowledge of the language, and I am sure that my eyes beamed when they told me that they both contributed to the *Claidheam.*

'Your Vice-President MacNeill sent me here. He would like me to write an article. I am George Moore.'

'I'll tell the Editor when he comes in, and if you'll send in your article he'll consider it. The next few numbers are full up.'

'This man must be a member of the Keating Branch,' I said to myself; and, though aware of my folly, I could not restrain my words, but fell to assuring him at once that I had not come to Ireland

to write the Keating Branch up in the English papers. He was sure I hadn't, but my article would have to be submitted to the Editor all the same.

'I appreciate your independence, and I'll submit an article, but in England editors are not quite so Olympian to me.'

The men returned to their account-books, and I left the office a little crestfallen, seeking somebody who would neither look upon my coming with suspicion, nor treat it as a joke; but finding no one until I met Æ in College Green coming out of a vegetarian eating-house, lighting his pipe after his dish of lentils.

'Ah, my dear Moore!'

It is a great good fortune to have a friend whose eyes light up always when they see one, and whose mind stoops or lifts itself instinctively to one's trouble, divining it, whether it be spiritual or material. Before I had time to speak myself he had begun to feel that Cathleen ni Houlihan was not treating me very kindly, and he allowed me to entertain him with an account of my visit to the Gaelic League, and the rebuffs that I had received from the assistant editors of the *Claidheam Soluis*.

'Neither of them knew my name, neither had seen my article in the *Nineteenth Century*, and last night Hyde said perhaps I would be more use to them over in England. Nobody wants me here, Æ, and yet I'm coming. I know I am.'

'But there is other work to do here,' Æ answered, 'beside the Gælic League.'

'None that would interest me. And when I told Hyde that I had disposed of the lease of my flat he

said: "Now, is that so? You don't tell me you've left London for good?"—evidently looking on my coming with suspicion. Yeats tried to treat it as an exquisite joke. Edward is afraid to approve; he sees in me one who may trouble somebody's religious convictions. Nobody wants me, Æ. I wish you would tell me why I am coming to Dublin. If you do you're a cleverer man than I am. You are that in any case. All I know for certain is that I am coming despite jokes and suspicion. All I hoped for was a welcome and some enthusiasm; no bonfires, torchlight processions, banners, bands, *Cead mille failte's*, nothing of that kind, only a welcome. It may be that I did expect some appreciation of the sacrifice I was making, for you see I'm throwing everything into the flames. Isn't it strange, Æ? You understand, but the others don't. I'll tell you something that I heard Whistler say years ago. It was in the Old Grosvenor Gallery. I have forgotten what we were talking about; one remembers the words but not what led up to them. "Nothing," he said, "I suppose, matters to you except your writing." And his words went to the very bottom of my soul, frightening me; and I have asked myself, again and again if I were capable of sacrificing brother, sister, mother, fortune, friend, for a work of art. One is near madness when nothing really matters but one's work, and I tell you that Whistler's words frightened me just as Rochefoucauld's famous epigram has frightened thousands. You know it? Something about the misfortunes of our best friends never being wholly disagreeable to us. We don't take pleasure in hearing of the misfortunes of our friends, but

there is a truth in Rochefoucauld's words all the same; and it wasn't until the Boer War drove me out of England that I began to think that Whistler's words mightn't be truer than Rochefoucauld's.'

Æ took out his watch and said he must be getting back to his office.

'I'm crossing to-night,' I cried after him, and in the steamer's saloon all I had not said to him rambled on and on in my head, and the summary of it all is that it might be better for me if Whistler's words were true, for in leaving England there could be no doubt that I was leaving a literary career behind me. England had been my inspiration, and all the while of that crossing *A Mummer's Wife* and *Esther Waters* seemed conclusive proof that I could only write about England. Is it likely, I asked, that he who wrote the most English of all novels should be able to describe Ireland? A wistful lake and some elusive hills rose up in my mind, and I felt that if England were hateful Ireland was somewhat repugnant to me.

'Then, what is it,' I cried, starting up from my berth, 'that is driving me out of England? for it is not natural to feel as determined as I feel, especially for me, who am not at all self-willed. There is no will in me. I am being driven, and I am being pushed headlong into the unknown.'

There was no motion on board; the steamer was being steered through windless waters, and, believing that we must be by this time nearing the Welsh coast, I climbed the brassy stairs and stood watching the unwrinkled tide sweeping round the great

rock. Nor was there a wind among the clouds; as moveless as marble they lay under the moon. 'A marmoreal sky,' I said, 'whereas the sea was never marmoreal.'

Along the foreland the shapes of the fields were visible in the moon-haze, and, while studying the beauty of the world by night, a lone star reminded me of Stella and I said:

'A man is never wholly unhappy as long as he is sure of his mistress's love.'

'After all,' she said, some hours later, 'a month isn't a long while.'

'It will pass too quickly,' I answered, and to avoid reproaches, and in the hope of enticing her to Ireland, I told her of a garden in the midst of Dublin with apple-trees and fig-trees and an avenue of lilac bushes as one comes down the steps from the wicket.

'For the garden is lower than the street and in the ditch (I know not how else to explain it) there are hawthorns and laburnums.'

'Four walks,' she said, 'and a grass plot.'

'There's a walk down the middle.'

'That can be sodded over. But why should I trouble to arrange your garden for you since I shall not see you any more?'

'But you will come to paint in Ireland?'

'Do you think that you'd like me to?'

'My dear Stella, the question is can I live in Ireland without you?' and I besought her for the sake of her art. 'The Irish mountains are as beautiful as the Welsh. Dublin is backed by blue hills, and you won't be obliged to live in a detestable

cottage as you were last year in Wales, but in a fine house.' And I told her that in my search for one to live in I had come across a house in Clondalkin, or near it, that would suit her perfectly—a moated stead built in the time of Anne, and, seeing she was interested, I described how I had crossed the moat by a little bridge, and between the bridge and the front door there were about thirty yards of gravel. 'The left wall of the house rises sheer out of the moat; on the other side there is a pathway, and at the back a fairly large garden—close on a hundred yards, I should say—and you like gardening, Stella.'

'I'm afraid that so much stagnant water——'

'But, dear one, the water of the moat is not stagnant; it is fed at the upper end by a stream, and it trickles away by the bridge into a brook.'

'And the house itself?' she asked.

'It is two-storeyed and there are some fine rooms in it, one that I think you could paint in. My recollection is a little dim, but I remember a dining-room and a very handsome drawing-room, and I think my impression was that a thousand pounds spent upon it would give you such a house as you couldn't get anywhere else. Of that I am sure, and the country about it is all that your art requires. I remember a row of fine chestnuts, and beyond it a far-reaching stretch of tilth to the valley of the Liffey. Promise me that you'll come?' She promised. 'And now, dear one, tell me of someone who will remove my furniture.'

II

A description of a furniture removal would have appealed to my æsthetic sense twenty years ago, and my style of Médan thread was strong enough to capture packers and their burdens; but the net that I cast now is woven of fine silk for the capture of dreams, memories, hopes, aspirations, sorrows, with here and there a secret shame. I was out of the house, then, one morning early, lest I should see a man seize the coal-scuttle and walk away with it, and on returning home that night I found everything in the drawing-room and the dining-room and the spare-room and the ante-room had been taken away, only the bedroom remained intact, and I wandered round the shell that I had lived in so long, pondering on the strange fact that my life in Victoria Street was no more than a dream, 'and with no more reality in it,' I added, 'than the dream that I shall dream here to-night.'

'Jane, this is the last time you'll call me for I'm going away by the mail at half-past eight from Euston.'

'Your life is all pleasure and glory, but I shall have to look round for another place,' I heard her say, as she pulled at the straps of my portmanteau, and her resentment against me increased when I put a sovereign into her hand. She cooked me excellent dinners, making life infinitely agreeable to me; a present of five pounds was certainly her due, and a sovereign was more than enough for the porter whom I suspected of poisoning my cat—a large, grey and

affectionate animal upon whom Jane, without the aid of a doctor, had impressed the virtue of chastity so successfully that he never sought the she, but remained at home, a quiet, sober animal that did not drink milk, only water, and who, when thrown up to the ceiling refrained from turning round, content to curl himself into a ball, convinced that my hands would receive him—an animal to whom I was so much attached that I had decided to bring him with me in a basket; but a few weeks before my departure he died of a stoppage in his entrails, brought about probably by a morsel of sponge fried in grease—a detestable and cruel way of poisoning cats often practised by porters. It was pitiful to watch the poor animal go to his pan and try to relieve himself, but he never succeeded in passing anything, and after the third day refused to try any more. We had recourse to a dose of castor oil, but it did not move him and after consultation we resolved to give an enema if he would allow us. The poor animal allowed us to do our will; he seemed to know that we were trying to help him, and received my caresses and my words with kindly looks while Jane administered the enema, saying that she didn't mind if the whole courtyard saw her do it, all she cared for was to save Jim's life. But the enema did not help him, and after it he neither ate nor drank, but lay down stoically to die. Death did not come to him for a long while; it seemed as if he would never drop off, and at last, unable to bear the sight of his sufferings any longer, Jane held his head in a pail of water, and after a few gasps the trial of life was over. It may have been that he died of the fur that he

licked away, collecting in a ball in his entrails, and that there is no cause for me to regret the sovereign given to the porter when the great van drove up to my door to take away the bedroom and kitchen furniture.

Everything except my personal luggage was going to Ireland by a small coasting steamer, which would not arrive for three weeks, and my hope was that the house in Upper Ely Place would then be ready to receive my furniture; but next morning only one workman could be discovered in my new house, and he lazily sweeping. The builder was rung up on the telephone; he promised many things. Three weeks passed away; the furniture arrived, but the vans had to go away again; communications were received from the firm who removed my furniture, demanding the return of the vans. All the usual inconvenience was endured, and it was not until a fortnight later that my Aubusson carpet was unrolled in the drawing-room one afternoon about two o'clock, Æ's leisure hour after his dinner.

He who remembers Æ in *Ave* will not be surprised to hear that the purple architecture and the bunches of roses shocked him so much that I think he was on the point of asking me to burn my carpet. It affected him so much that it was with difficulty that I persuaded him to withdraw his eyes from it and look at the pictures. I would conceal the fact if I dared, but a desire of truth compels me to record that when he first saw Manet's portrait of Madame Manet, it seemed to him commonplace Impressionist painting, and on the whole uncouth.

'It seems to you, Æ, like the prose of painting rather than the poetry; I know it does.'

'Did it never strike you in the same light?'

'Not quite. Let me draw your attention to the beautiful grey of the background in harmony with the grey of the dress. Can you not see that the paint is spilt upon the canvas like cream—not brushed hither and thither with brushes—and that the suffused colour in a tea-rose is not more beautiful?'

'Oh, Moore!'

'Dear Æ,' I answered, 'if you will not admire the beauty of Manet's paint, admire its morality. How winningly it whispers, "Be not ashamed of anything but to be ashamed." And I chose this mauve wall-paper, for upon it this grey portrait will be triumphant. The other Manet is but a sketch, and the casual critic only sees that she is cock-eyed; the whiteness of her shoulders escapes him, and the pink of her breast's blossoms. Manet's pink—almost a white! I remember a peony. . . . I'll turn the picture a little more to the light. Now, Æ, I beseech you to look upon it. No, it doesn't please you. Well, look at my Monet instead; a flooded meadow and willows evanescent in the mist. Compared with Monet, Constable's vision is a journeyman's, and he is by no means seen at his worst in that little picture. But look again at the willows. No one ever looked at Nature so frankly. The Impressionists brought a delicacy of vision into art undreamt-of before. In their pictures the world is young again. Look at this charming girl by Berthe Morisot. Tell me, was a girl ever so young before?—an April girl, hyacinth-coloured dress and daffodil hair.'

Æ liked better Berthe Morisot's picture of her little daughter coming to see the maid who is sewing under a dove-cot.

'She has caught the mystery of the child's wondering eyes. We call it mystery,' he added, 'but it is merely stupidity.' The remark is quite true, but it surprised me. . . . People often say things that are not in the least like them, therefore criticism will reprove me for recording words that Æ may have uttered, but which are admittedly not like him. I would argue with criticism if I weren't so busy with my pictures.

'Ah, here's my Conder! You can't but like this picture of Brighton—the blue sea breaking into foam so cheerfully; a happy lady looks from her balcony at other happy ladies walking in the sunshine. The optimism of painting!' Æ sighed. 'You don't like it? Here is a Mark Fisher; women singing under trees. *The Land of Wine and Song*, he calls it, and if you look through the trees you will see an estuary and a town in long perspective dying in the distance. Like my Mark Fisher, Æ. Why do you hesitate?'

'I do like it, but——'

'But what?'

'It is a landscape in some small world, a third the size of our world.'

'I know what is the matter with you, Æ; you're longing for Watts. You try to disguise it, but you are sighing for *Time treading on the Big Toe of Eternity*, or *Death bridging Chaos*, or *The Triumph of Purgatory over Heaven*.'

'Admit——'

'No, Æ, I'll admit nothing, except that he painted a heron rather well, and then dropped into sixteenth-century treacle. Impressionism is a new melodic invention invisible to you at present. One of these days you'll see it. But there's no use talking about painting. Come into the garden. I'm expecting a lady; she will join us there, and if you'll take her out among the hills she'll show you how to draw a round brush from one side of the canvas to the other without letting it turn round in the middle, leaving a delicious ridge of paint with a lot of little waggles——"'

'But little waggles, my dear Moore, are not——'

'Æ, we've talked enough about painting for one afternoon. Come into the garden.'

Æ took out his watch; it was nearly three, he must be getting back to his office; but would I tell the lady that he'd be glad to go out painting with her any Sunday morning?

It was sad to lose him, and while walking to the wicket it seemed to me clear that he was the one who could restore to me my confidence in life; and when he left me, a certain mental sweetness seemed to have gone out of the air, and, thinking of him, I began to wonder if he were aware of his own sweetness. It is as spontaneous and instinctive in him as . . . A breath of scent from the lilac bushes seemed to finish my sentence for me, and it carried my mind into a little story I had heard from Hughes. He and Æ were students together in the Art School in Dublin, and in a few weeks masters and students were alike amazed at Æ's talent for drawing and composition; he sketched the naked model from

sight with an ease that was unknown to them, and, turning from the model, he designed a great assembly of Gods about the shores of the lake renowned in Celtic tradition. 'Compared with him we seemed at that time no more than miserable scratchers and soilers of paper.' Hughes' very words! Yet, in spite of an extraordinary fluency of expression, abundant inspiration, and the belief of the whole school that a great artist was in him, Æ laid aside his brushes, determined not to pick them up again until he had mastered the besetting temptation that art presented at that moment. He feared it as a sort of self-indulgence which, if yielded to, would stint his life; art with him is a means rather than an end; it should be sought, for by its help we can live more purely, more intensely, but we must never forget that to live as fully as possible is, after all, our main concern; and he had known this truth ever since he had defied God on the road to Armagh.

But his life did not take its definite direction until an Indian missionary arrived in Dublin. It seemed odd that I should have personal knowledge of this very Brahmin. Chance had thrown me in his way; I had met him in West Kensington, and had fled before him; but Æ had gone to him instinctively as to a destiny; and a few months later the Upanishads and the Vedas were born again in verse and in prose—the metrical version better than the prose; in the twenties our thoughts run into verse, and Æ's flowed into rhyme and metre as easily as into line and colour. But, deriving the same pleasure from the writing of verse as he did from painting, he was again assailed by scruples of conscience, and

to free himself from the suspicion that he might be still living in time rather than in eternity, he charged his disciples to decide whether he should contribute essays or poems. It is to their wise decision that we owe the two inspired volumes *The Earth Breath* and *Homeward.*

As the reader follows my tracing of Æ's soul at a very difficult point in his life, he must be careful to avoid any inference that Æ endeavoured to escape from the sensual will because he believed it to be the business of everyone to tear it out of his life; an intellect suckled on the lore of the East does not fall into the error of the parish priest, who accepts chastity as a virtue in itself, thinking that if he foregoes the pleasure of Bridget's he is free to devote himself to that of his own belly; and I smiled, for in my imagination I could see a Yogi raising his Oriental eyes in contempt at the strange jargon of metaphysics that a burly fellow from Connaught, out of breath from the steep ascent, pours over his bowl of rice.

My thoughts melted away and I dreamed a long while, or a moment, I know not which, on the pure wisdom of the East and our own grossness.

'But of course,' I said, waking up suddenly, 'we have all to yield something to gain a great deal. Were it otherwise, Society would come to pieces like a rotten sponge. The right of property holds good in all Society; but in the West ethics invade the personal life in a manner unknown to the East, so much so that the Oriental stands agape at our folly, knowing well that every man brings different instincts and ideas into the world with him. The

East says to the West, "You prate incessantly about monogamy, and the fruit of all your labour is a house divided against itself, for man is polygamous if he is anything, and if our deeds go down one set of lines and our ideas go down another, our lives are wasted, and in the end——" '

A sudden thought darting across my mind left my sentence unfinished, and I asked myself what manner of man I was. The question had often been asked before, had always remained unanswered; but that day, sitting under my apple-tree, it seemed to me that I had suddenly come upon the secret lair in which the soul hides itself. An extraordinarily clear and inflexible moral sense rose up and confronted me, and, looking down my past life, I was astonished to see how dependent my deeds had always been upon my ideas. I had never been able to do anything that I thought wrong, and my conscience had inspired my books. *A Modern Lover* is half-forgotten, but it seems to me that even in those early days I was interested in the relation of thought and deed. *The Mummer's Wife* declines, for she is without sufficient personal conscience to detach herself from the conventions in which she has been brought up. *A Drama in Muslin—Holy Muslin,* would be a better title, *un peu mièvre cependant*—a better one would be *Balblanc* . . . the English equivalent is far to seek, and *Esther Waters* is the exposition of the personal conscience striving against the communal, and, feeling that I had learned to know myself at last, I rose from the seat, and looked round, thinking that in Æ as in myself thought and action are at one. We are alike in essentials, though to the casual

observer regions apart. . . . But everybody in Dublin thinks that he is like Æ as everybody in the world thinks he is like Hamlet.

He comes to see me every day between two and three riding his old bicycle through the gateway; I run to the wicket to let him in, and we walk together to the great apple-tree and sit there talking of Manet and the immortality of the soul.

It is pleasant to remember these weeks for I was very happy in these first conversations; but the reader knows how impossible it is for me to believe that anyone likes me for my own sake, and at the end of a week—my happiness may have lasted halfway into the second week—at the end of eight or nine days I was trying to find sufficient reason why Æ should seek me out in my garden every afternoon. It could not be the pleasure of my society that attracted him. 'He is clearly attracted by something in me that he has been seeking.' But there did not seem to be much sense in this, and on thinking it over again I hit on the idea that he might be seeking me because he recognized me as the spiritual influence that Ireland had been waiting for so long. He was the only one in Dublin who had shown no surprise at my coming, and I dreamed on until his voice called me out of my dream of himself and myself; and, as if he had been aware all the time that I had been thinking about him, he said:

'As soon as you had lived as much of your life as was necessary for you to live in Paris and in London you were led back to us through Yeats?'

'No, Æ, not through Yeats. At most he was an instrument, and it is possible to go further back than

him. Martyn was before Yeats. I began to be interested in Ireland when Edward spoke about writing his plays in Irish; but, like Yeats, he was no more than an instrument, for neither of them wanted me to come back. But you did, and somehow I can't help feeling that you knew I was coming back. You had read my books, and it was my books, perhaps, that made you wish for my return. Wish—not as one wishes to smoke a cigarette, but you really did want to have me here?'

'I certainly did wish that England would return to us some of our men of talent.'

But this wasn't the answer that I wanted.

'What I would like to know, Æ, is did you wish to have me back for my own sake, because you felt that something was lacking in my books? Or was it merely for the sake of Ireland? I'm afraid the questions I'm putting to you make me seem very silly and egotistical, yet I don't feel either.'

'Perhaps Ireland needs you a little.'

'I wonder. I suppose Ireland needs us all. But there is something I have never told you—something I have never told anybody.'

Æ puffed at his pipe in silence, and I strove against the temptation to confide in him the story of the summons I had received on the road to Chelsea. Æ's idea of me was not of one that saw visions or heard spirit voices, yet he believed me to be the spiritual influence that Ireland was waiting for. 'How complicated everything is! . . . Nothing will be gained by telling him. I won't tell him.' And I sat asking myself if I should be able to resist the temptation. The conversation took a different turn; I felt

relieved; the temptation seemed to have passed from me, but a few minutes after my story slipped from my lips as nearly as possible in these words:

'You know that I came over here to publish an article in *The Freeman's Journal* about the Boer War, and the article attracted a great deal of attention?' Æ nodded, and I could see that he was listening intently. 'If it hadn't been for that article all the Boers would have been murdered and England would have saved two hundred million pounds. Providence has to make a choice of an instrument; you are chosen to-day, another to-morrow; that day I was the chosen instrument, and on the road to Chelsea, thinking of this great and merciful Providence, I heard a voice bidding me back to Ireland. It is difficult to know for certain what one hears and what one imagines one has heard; one's thoughts are sometimes very loud, but the voice was from without. I am sure it was, Æ. Three or four days afterwards I heard the same words spoken within my ear while I was lying in bed asleep. But the voice spoke so distinctly and so clearly that I threw out my arms to retain the speaker. Nobody was there. Nor is this all. Very soon afterwards, in my drawing-room in Victoria Street about eleven o'clock at night, I experienced an extraordinary desire to pray, which I resisted for a long time. The temptation proved stronger than my power to resist it; and I shall never forget how I fell forward and buried my face in the arm-chair and prayed.'

'What prayer did you say?'

'One can pray without words, surely?'

'When the hooker that was taking Yeats over to

Aran or taking him back to Galway was caught in a storm Yeats fell upon his knees and tried to say a prayer; but the nearest thing to one he could think of was "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit," and he spoke as much of *Paradise Lost* as he could remember.'

'But, Æ, you either believe or you don't believe what I say.'

'I can quite understand that you're deeply interested in the voice you heard, or think you heard; but our concern isn't so much with it as with the fact that you have been brought back to Ireland.'

A cloud then seemed to come between us, and out of this cloud I heard Æ saying that if he were to tell people that all his drawings were done from sittings given to him by the gods, it would be easy for him to sell every stroke he put on canvas, and to pass himself off as a very wonderful person.

'But your drawings are done from sittings given to you by the gods. I remember your telling me that three stood at the end of your bed looking at you one morning.'

'Three great beings came to my bedside, but I cannot tell you if I saw them directly, as I see you (if I see you directly), or whether I saw them reflected as in a mirror. In either case they came from a spiritual world.'

'A vision was vouchsafed to you. Why not to me?'

'I don't dispute the authenticity of your vision, my dear Moore. Why should I? How could I even wish to dispute it? On what grounds?'

'But you seem to doubt it?'

'No. A vision is the personal concern of the visionary.'

'No more! Who sent the vision? Whose voice did I hear? An angel's?'

'Angels are Jehovah's messengers and apparitors. And this I can say: the gods that inspired your coming were not Asiatic.'

'No, indeed; I long ago disassociated myself from the Asiatic gods, to whom the English are praying that strength may be given them to destroy the Boers quickly and at little cost—a poor little nation, no bigger than Connaught! England became so beastly that I had to come away. The lust for blood was in everybody's face. If the news came in that five hundred Boers were taken prisoners faces darkened, and brightened if the news were that five hundred had been killed. England has made me detest Christianity. . . . Born in the amphitheatre, it didn't leave it without acquiring a taste for blood, and the newspapers are filled with scorn of Kruger because he reads the Bible. Think of it, Æ! Because he reads his Bible!'

'But don't think of it, my dear Moore.'

'It would be better not, for when I do life seems too shameful to be endured. . . . The Bishops of York and Canterbury praying to Jesus or to His Father—which?'

'Probably to His Father. But go on with your story.'

'What story?'

'The message that you received didn't come round to you by way of Judæa.'

'No, indeed, the gods that inspired me are among

our native divinities. Angus, so far as I know him, seems to have been kind and compassionate. So far as I know, his clergy never ordered that anyone should be burnt at the stake for holding that it was not the kisses but the songs of the birds circling about his forehead that created love. All the same, the Druids——'

No one may speak ill of the Druids in Æ's presence, and he told me that he did not know of any mention in Irish legends of human sacrifices, and if there had been, the Christian revisers of the legends would not have failed to mention them.

'You love the Druids,' I said, looking into his calm and earnest face. 'When you were earning fifty pounds a year in Pim's shop you used to go to Bray Head and address a wondering crowd! Standing on a bit of broken wall, all your hair flowing in the wind, you cried out to them to return to the kind, compassionate gods that never ordered burnings in the market-place, and I don't see why, Æ, we should not go forth together and preach the Danaan divinities, north, south, east, and west. You shall be Paul. Barnabas quarrelled with Paul. I'll be Luke and take down your words.'

'It would be your own thoughts, my dear Moore, that you would be reporting, not mine; and, though Ireland stands in need of a new religion——'

'And a new language. One is no good without the other.'

We fell to talking of the Irish language, I maintaining that it would be necessary to revive it, Æ thinking that the Anglo-Irish idiom would be sufficient for literature, until the thought emerged

that perhaps it might have been Diarmuid that bade me to Ireland.

'I'd like to see the cromlechs under which the lovers slept, but I don't know where to find them.'

Æ answered that at Whitsuntide he would have three or four days' holiday, and proposed to visit the sacred places with me.

'We'll seek the ancient divinities of the Gael together.' Æ pulled out his watch and said he must be going, and we strolled across the greensward to the wicket. 'The ash will be in leaf the day we start. I hope, Æ, that nothing will happen to prevent us'; and I jumped out of bed every morning to see if the promise were for a fine or a wet day.

I had arrived in Ireland in March; it was raining then, but the weather had taken a turn in the middle of April; the fifteenth was the first fine day, and ever since the days had played in the garden like children, shadows of apple-trees and lilac-bushes moving over the sweet grass with skies of ashen blue overhead fading into a dim, creamy pink in the South and East. The hawthorns were in full leaf, and among the little metallic leaves white and pink stars had just begun to appear, and the scent of these floated after us, for no sinister accident had happened. Æ called for me as he had promised, and we went away together on bicycles—myself on a new machine bought for the occasion, Æ on the old one that he has ridden all over Ireland, from village to village, establishing co-operative creameries and banks. And side by side we rode together through the early streets to Amiens Street Station, where we took second-class tickets to Drogheda—an hour's journey

from Dublin. At Drogheda we jumped on our bicycles again; two tramps we were that day, enjoying the wide world, and so intoxicating was the sunlight that it was with difficulty I kept myself from calling to Æ that I felt certain the Gods would answer us. I would have done this if a river had not been passing by, and such a pretty river—a brook rather than a river.

'Æ, Æ, look and admire it!'

A few minutes afterwards our brook or river acquired such a picturesqueness that perforce he jumped from his bicycle and unslung his box of pastels which he wore over his shoulder.

'Trees,' he said, 'emerging like vapours,' and while he discovered the drawing of a brook purling round many a miniature isle between low mossy banks, I lay beside him, forgetful of everything but the faint stirring of the breeze in the willows and the song of a bird in the reeds—a reed-warbler no doubt; and while I lay wondering if the bird were really a warbler, Æ finished his pastel. He leaned it against a tree, looked at it, and asked me if I liked it. . . . It was a spiritual seeing of the world, and I told him that no one had ever seen Nature more beautifully. He put his picture into his portfolio, I put mine into my memory, and we went away on our bicycles through the pretty neglected country until we came to a grey bridge standing thirty, perhaps fifty, feet above the shallow river; the beauty of its slim arches compelled me to dismount, and, leaning on the parapet, I started this lamentation:

'No more stone bridges will be built, Æ. It has

come to this, that a crack in one of those arches will supply a zealous county councillor with a pretext for an iron bridge. The pleasure of these modern days is to tear down beautiful yesteryear.'

'No arch will fall within the next ten years,' Æ answered. 'Admire the bridge without troubling yourself as to what its fate will be when you are gone.'

Æ's optimism is delightful, but, while approving it, I could not keep back the argument that a mountain fails to move our sympathies, for it is always with us, whereas a cloud curls and uncurls and disappears.

'We cling to life because it is for ever slipping from us. Don't you think so? It is strange, Æ, that, although you know more poetry by heart than anyone I ever met, I have never heard you repeat a verse from *Omar Khayyám*. You love what is permanent, Æ, and believe yourself immortal. That is why, perhaps, Shelley's *Hymn to Pan* is for you the most beautiful lyric in the world. Do say it again —"Sileni and Fauns" and that lovely line ending "moist river lawns." One sees it all—something about Tempe outgrowing the light of the dying day. Say it all over again, Æ.'

He repeated the verses as we ascended the hill.

'Look at that hound!'

He came towards us, trotting amiably, gambolling now and again for sheer pleasure. The loneliness of the road had awakened the affection that his nature was capable of. He leaned himself up against me; his paws rested upon my shoulders; I fondled the silken ears and he yawned, perhaps because he wished me to admire his teeth—beautiful they were

and skilfully designed for their purpose, to seize and to tear.

'Yet, Æ, his eyes are gentle. Tell me, is his soul in his eyes or in these fangs?'

'My dear Moore, you've been asking me questions since eight o'clock this morning'; and we all three went on together till we reached a farmhouse in which the hound lived with an old woman. She told us that he had been brought to her very ill.

'It was distemper, but I brought him through it, and now they'll soon be taking him from me. And you'll be sorry to leave me, won't you, Sampson?'

The dog put his long nose into her hand.

'At the end of September,' I said to Æ, 'he'll be taken away to scent out foxes with his brethren in the woods over yonder, and to lead them across the green plains, for he is a swift hound. Don't you think he is? But you won't look at him. If he were called Bran or Lomaire——'

We hopped on our bicycles and rode on till we came to a great river with large sloping banks, covered with pleasant turf and shadowed by trees. Æ told me that the river we were looking at was the famous Boyne, and he pointed out the monument erected in commemoration of the battle.

'The beastly English won that battle. If they'd only been beaten!'

We rode on again until we came to a road as straight as an arrow stretching indefinitely into the country with hedges on either side—a tiresome road and so commonplace that the suspicion entered my mind that this journey to Meath was but a practical joke, and that Æ would lead me up and down these

roads from morning till noon, from noon till evening, and then would burst out laughing in my face; or, perhaps, by some dodge he would lose me and return to Dublin alone with a fine tale to tell about me. But such a trick would be a mean one, and there is no meanness in Æ. Besides the object of the journey was a search for Divinity. Æ does not joke on sacred subjects. So I rode in silence until a woman appeared with candles and matches in her hand.

'But why should we light candles in broad daylight, Æ? There isn't a cloud in the sky.'

Æ told me to buy a candle and a box of matches and follow him across the stile, which I did, and down a field until we came to a hole in the ground, and in the hole was a ladder. He descended into it and, fearing to show the white feather, I stepped down after him. At twenty feet from the surface he went on his hands and knees and began to crawl through a passage narrow as a burrow. I crawled behind him, and, after crawling for some yards, found myself in a small chamber about ten feet in height and ten in width. A short passage connected it with a larger chamber, perhaps twenty feet in width and height, and built of great unhewn stones leaned together, each stone jutting a little in front of the other till they almost met, a large flat stone covering in the vault.

'And it was here,' I said, 'that the ancient tribes came to do honour to the great divinities—tribes, but not savage tribes, for these stones were placed so that not one has changed its place though four thousand years have gone by. Look, Æ, at this

great hollowed stone. Maybe many a sacrificial rite has been performed in it.'

Æ did not answer this remark, and I regretted having made it, for it seemed to betray a belief that the Druids had indulged in blood sacrifice, and, to banish the thought from Æ's mind, I asked him if he could read the strange designs scribbled upon the walls.

'The spot within the first circle is the earth and the first circle is the sea; the second circle is the heavens, and the third circle the Infinite Lir, the God over all Gods, the great fate that surrounds mankind and Godkind.'

'Let us sit down,' I said, 'and talk of the mysteries of the Druids, for they were here for certain; and, as nothing dies, Æ, something remains of them and of the demigods and of the Gods.'

'The Druids,' he answered, 'refrained from committing their mysteries into writing, for writing is the source of heresies and confusions, and it was not well that the folk should discuss Divine things among themselves; for them the arts of war and the chase, and for the Druids meditation on eternal things. But there is no doubt that the Druids were well instructed in the heavens; and the orientation of the stones that surround their temples implies elaborate calculations. At the same hour every year the sun shines through certain apertures.'

'But, Æ, since nothing dies, and all things are as they have ever been, the Gods should appear to us, for we believe in them, and not in the gods that men have brought from Asia. Angus is more real to me than Christ. Why should he not appear to

me, his worshipper? I am afraid to call upon Manaanan or on Dana, but do you make appeal.'

Æ acquiesced, and he soon was on the ground, his legs tucked under him like a Yogi, waiting for the vision, and, not knowing what else to do, I withdrew to the second chamber, and ventured to call upon Angus, Diarmuid's father, that he or his son might show himself to me. There were moments when it seemed that a divine visitation was about to be vouchsafed to me, and I strove to concentrate all my thoughts upon him that lives in the circle that streams about our circle. But the great being within the light that dawned faded into nothingness. Again I strove; my thoughts were gathered up, and all my soul went out to him, and again the darkness lightened. 'He is near me; in another moment he will be by me.' But that moment did not come, and, fearing my presence in the tomb might endanger Æ's chance of converse with the Immortals, I crept along the passage and climbed into the upper air and lay down, disappointed at my failure, thinking that if I had tried a third time I might have seen Angus or Diarmuid. There are three circles, and it is at the third call that he should appear. But it would be useless to return to the tomb; Angus would not gratify so weak a worshipper with vision, and my hopes were now centred in Æ, who was doubtless in the midst of some great spiritual adventure which he would tell me presently.

The sun stood overhead, and never shall I forget the stillness of that blue day, and the beauty of the blue silence with no troublesome lark in it; a very faint blue when I raised my eyes, fading into grey,

perhaps with some pink colour behind the distant trees—a sky nowise more remarkable in colour than any piece of faded silk; but beautiful because of the light that it shed over the green undulations, greener than any I had seen before, yet without a harsh tone in it, softened by a delicate haze, trees emerging like vapours just as Æ had painted them. And lying in the warm grass on the tumulus, the green country unfolded before my eyes, mile after mile, dreaming under the sun, half asleep, half awake, trees breaking into leaf, hedgerows into leaf and flower, long herds winding knee-deep in succulent herbage. It is wonderful to sit on a tumulus and see one's own country under a divine light. An ache came into my heart, and a longing for the time when the ancient Irish gathered about the tumulus on which I was lying to celebrate the marriage of earth and sky. On days as beautiful as this day they came to make thanksgiving for the return of the sun; and as I saw them in my imagination arrive with their Druids, two opaque-looking creatures, the least spiritual of men, with nothing in their heads but some ignorant Christian routine, lifted their bicycles over the style.

'They're not going to descend into the sacred places!' I said. 'They shall not interrupt Æ's vision; they shall not!'

As they approached me I saw that they had candles and matches in their hands, and, resolved at any cost to save the tomb from sacrilege, I strove to detain them with speech about the beauty of the summer-time and the endless herbage in which kine were fattening. 'Fattening' was the word I used, thinking to interest them.

'The finest fattening land in all Ireland,' one of them said, 'but we're going below.'

I should have told them the truth, that a great poet, a great painter, and a great seer was, in their own phraseology, 'below,' and it might be that the Gods would vouchsafe a vision to him. Would they be good enough to wait till he ascended? Mere Christian brutes they were, approvers of the Boer War, but they might have been persuaded to talk with me for ten or fifteen minutes; they might have been persuaded to sit upon the mound if I had told them the truth. I leaned over the opening, listening, hoping their bellies might stick in the narrow passage; but as they seemed to have succeeded in passing through, I returned to the tumulus hopeless. 'The Gods will not show themselves while Presbyterian ministers are about; Æ will not stay in the tomb with them'; and at every moment I expected to see him rise out of the earth. But it was the ministers who appeared a few minutes afterwards, and, blowing out their candles in the blue daylight, they asked me if I had been below.

'I have been in the temple,' I answered.

'Did you see the fellow below?'

'I'm waiting for him—a great writer and a great painter,' I answered indignantly.

'Is it a history he's brooding down there?' one of them asked, laughing; and I lay down on the warm grass thinking of the pain their coarse remarks must have caused Æ. He came out of the hill soon after. It was just as I had expected. The vision was about to appear, but the clergymen had interrupted it, and when they left the mood had passed.

III

As we rode to Newgrange along smooth roads, between tall hedges, the green undulating country flowing on either side melting into grey distances, Æ told me that we should see at Newgrange the greater temples of the Druids; and through his discourses the hope glimmered that perhaps we might be more fortunate at Newgrange than we had been at Dowth. It was only reasonable that the Gods should show themselves to us if they deemed us worthy, and if we were not worthy—Æ at least—who were worthy among living men? The Presbyterian ministers would be absent from Newgrange; and we rode on, Æ thinking of Angus and his singing birds, myself of Midir at the feast among the spears and the wine-cups, his arm round Etain, the two passing through the window in the roof, and how all that the host assembled below saw was two white swans circling in the air above the palace.

'Whither did they go, Æ?'

'Did who go?' he answered.

'Etain and Midir.'

'Towards the fairy mountains of Slievenamon, and on the lake there Etain rejoined her kindred.'

'A beautiful story,' I replied. 'Tell me another, for these legends beguile the monotony of endless roads and hedges'; and, seeing Æ hesitate at the next cross-roads, I said: 'Æ, I'm sure you don't know the way. Hadn't we better ask?'

Whom to ask was the question, for no living being seemed to inhabit the green wilderness. If we

came upon a cottage it was locked, the herdsman being, without doubt, away, opening gates, changing his cattle from pasture to pasture. We rode mile after mile, seeking somebody who could guide us, until at last we came to a ruined dwelling, and a curious one—not exactly a cabin, for it was built of brick and stood above the level of the road. A rubble heap had to be scaled to reach the one room that remained, and it was in this lonely tenement that we found our guide, a child of seven or eight, dressed in a little shirt and an immense pair of trousers, which he hitched up from time to time, a sharp-witted little fellow, and as alert as a terrier.

'You've come out of your road altogether and will have to go back a couple of miles. Or maybe it'd be best for you to go on up this road till you come to the big hill beyant, and then turn to your left.'

The little fellow took our fancy, and, as we were leaving, we turned back to ask him if he were living alone. He said his mother lived with him, but she went out every day to the neighbours to try to get a bit!

'But there are no neighbours. We've seen nobody and have ridden many miles.' The little fellow looked puzzled, and, on pressing him to say where his mother had gone, he mentioned the name of some town which Æ told me was twenty miles away. 'Can your mother walk twenty miles?'

'Faith she can, sir, and back again.'

'And she leaves you all alone?'

We gave him a slice of bread and butter, which he held in his hand, not daring to eat in our presence.

We pressed him to eat, and he took a bite timidly, and moved away like a shy animal. As a slice of bread and butter did not seem to us to be a sufficient reward for his directions to Newgrange, I felt in my pocket for a shilling, and asked him how much his mother brought back with her.

'Sometimes a few coppers.'

His eyes lit up when I handed him the shilling, and he said:

'That'll buy us two grand dinners; she won't have to be going away again for a long time.'

'You don't like your mother to leave you here all day long?' Again the little fellow seemed unwilling to answer us. 'But she'll be coming back to-night?'

'She will if she don't get a sup too much.'

'And if she does you'll stay here all night by yourself? Aren't you afraid all alone at night?'

'I am when the big dog does come.'

'What dog?'

'A mad dog. He does wake me up out of my bed.' We looked and saw his bed, a few rags in a corner.

'But the dog doesn't come into the room?'

'No; but I do be hearing him tearing the stones outside.'

'And do you ever see him?'

'When he gets up there I do,' and he pointed to the broken wall. 'He was up there last night and he looking down at me, and his eyes red as fire, and his hair all stuck up agin the moon.'

'What did you do?'

'I got down under the clothes.'

'A nightmare,' I whispered to Æ. 'But if the

dog be mad,' I said to the little chap, 'he shouldn't be allowed to run about the country. He ought to be shot. Why don't the police?'

'How could they shoot him and he dead already?'

'But if he be dead how is that he comes up on the rafters?'

'I dunno, sir.'

'Whose dog is it?'

'Martin Spellacy ownded him.' And we learned that Martin Spellacy lived about a mile down the road and had bought the dog at Drogheda to guard his orchard which was robbed every year; but the dog turned out to be a sleepy old thing that no one was afraid of, and the apples were robbed every year until the dog died.

'Then were they robbed no longer?'

'No, because they do be afeard of his ghost; he's in the orchard every night, a terrible black baste, and nobody would go within a mile of that orchard as soon as the dark evening comes on.'

'But if the ghost is in the orchard watching, how is it that he comes here?'

The little fellow looked at me with a puzzled stare, and answered that he didn't know, but accepted the suggestion that ghosts could be in two places at once. We rode away, a little overcome at the thought of the child asleep that night among the rags in the corner, fearing every moment lest the dog should appear on the rafters. But we couldn't take him with us; and we bicycled on, thinking of his strange story, how Martin Spellacy's apples were better watched over by the ghost of a dog than by a real dog, until we came to a part of the road shaded by trees, and we

got off our bicycles and went through a gate into a drove-way. I can see the trees and the gateway quite clearly; there must have been a drove-way, and when I rub my memory a cottage begins to appear. A woman comes from the cottage and I hear her—the simile of the picture no longer holds good; memory retains sound as well as colour. I hear her saying:

'You won't be writing your names on the stones?'

'On the sacred stones!' I answered.

'Well, you see, sir, tourists do be coming from all parts, and my orders are to get a promise from everyone visiting the cave not to write on the walls. Of course, one can't be knowing everybody that comes here, but I'm sure that no gentleman like you would be doing such a thing.'

'Don't stay to expostulate,' and Æ took me by the arm, and we passed out of the shadow of the trees into the blue daylight. A little to the left was the tumulus, a small hill overgrown with hazel and blackthorn thickets, with here and there a young ash coming into leaf. On all sides great stones stood on end, or had fallen, and I would have stayed to examine the carvings or the scratches with which these were covered, but Æ pointed to the entrance of the temple—a triangular opening, something no larger than a fox's or a badger's den; and I went down on my hands and knees, remembering that we had not come to Newgrange to investigate but to evoke.

And in the tumulus we remained upwards of an hour, and on leaving it we climbed through the thickets, plucking the tall grasses, mentally tired and

and humbled in spirit. The Gods had not answered our prayers. It could not have been because they deemed us unworthy that they had not shown themselves, but because of some hostile presence! But we were alone! Could the Gods, then, be looking upon me as hostile! If they did they must know very little about the human heart. The wisdom of the Gods may not be questioned; and I listened to a robin that was singing in a blackthorn, thinking that the Druids had listened to it. And, stepping over the stones that our ancestors had placed so cunningly that they had lasted for four thousand years at least, I asked Æ whence the stones had come, for we had not passed anything like a quarry since early morning.

Our talk very likely branched into some learned discussion regarding the antiquity of man. On such occasions one mutters to one's fellow that about a million years ago man separated himself from the ape; but my memory is like an old picture, and on certain places Time's shadows fall heavily, and I have forgotten everything that happened after we descended the hillside, until Æ and I sat down in front of the temple to munch bread and butter. A restless fellow, for no sooner were the slices finished than he began to sketch the stones; and I remember thinking that it was as well he had an occupation, for one cannot talk in front of a Druid temple four thousand years old.

The same landscape lay before me as had astonished me at Dowth, the same green wilderness; groups of trees had been added to the foreground some hundred yards away, but beyond them were the

same green undulations. The slender green landscape lay under a heavy, sulky summer-time, her bosom swelling into womanhood; in another month the landscape would be all ungainly and melancholy as a woman with child. . . . A numbness stole upon my eyelids, and I began to see the strange folk plainer, coming in procession to the altar headed by the Druids. Ireland was wonderful then . . . and, opening my eyes, Ireland seemed wonderful in the blue morning that hung about her, unfolding like a flower—a great blue convolvulus hanging above the green land, swelling like the sea. My eyes closed again. It seemed to me that I could dream for ever of the Gods, and the mysteries of Time, and the changes in the life of Man, of the listless beauty of the sky above, fading imperceptibly as the hours went by. 'Roseate grey and purple,' I said, coming into it. My eyes closed and dreams began, and when my eyes opened again and I looked out across the country, a giant outline showed through the sun-haze miles away.

'Has Angus risen to greet us, or MacLir come up from the sea?' I said, pointing. 'That wasn't there an hour ago.'

The giant outline grew clearer, and, shading his eyes with his hand, Æ studied it for a long time.

'It's Tara,' he said, 'that you're looking at. On a clear evening Tara can be seen from Newgrange.'

'Tara, Æ! Tara appearing in person to him who is relating the story of her lovers. A sign from the Gods, Æ! I'm sure and certain that there is more in this apparition than accidental weather!'

I started to my feet, and at that moment sounds

of voices called me back again to 1901 . . . the clergymen were coming through the gate, and askance we watched them cross the field and go down on their hands and knees. We did not hope exactly against hope, for the larger failed to squeeze himself through the stones and came towards us.

'Let us go, Æ.'

'Yes, let us go to Tara and escape from these Christian belly-gods.'

'But Tara lies out of our road some twenty miles,' Æ objected as we rode away.

'But the Gods have shown Tara to us because they await us.'

'It isn't there that they'd be waiting for us,' Æ answered, and when I asked him why he thought we should be more likely to meet the Gods elsewhere, he told me that he did not remember that the Gods had ever been seen at Tara.

'And therefore you think that the apparition of the hill as we lay among the cromlechs was accidental? Of course you know best; but even though the hand of Providence be not in it, I'd like to go to Tara, for then I could get a glimpse of the great plains about the hill into my dialogue.'

Æ did not think that descriptions of Nature should enter very largely into this play, and he said that any allusions to the woods that Grania roamed with Laban should be drawn from my knowledge of Nature rather than from any particular observation of a particular place.

'No one can imagine a landscape that he has not seen, Æ.'

'All my best landscapes come to me in a vision.

Last night I saw giants rolling great stones up a hillside with intent to destroy a city.'

'Perhaps the hillside you saw was Tara.'

'No,' he said, 'it wasn't. Tara was not destroyed by giants but by an ecclesiastic.'

'And therefore was worthless,' I muttered. And we talked a long while of the monk that had walked round Tara, ringing a bell and cursing the city, which was then abandoned and Ireland given over to division—'which has endured ever since,' I added. Æ admitted that this memory of Tara did not endear the hill to him, but that was not his reason for not wishing to go there.

'It is at least twenty miles from here,' he said, 'and I don't think there's an inn on this side, nor am I sure that there is one on the other. We would have to sleep at——' and he mentioned the name of some village which I have forgotten. 'But Monasterboice is only six miles from here, and the herdsman's wife will be able to give us tea and bread and butter.'

I remember a man telling me that he had gone to Wales to track Borrow from village to village. 'I shall not be accused by anyone,' he said, 'of lacking sympathy for any place visited by Borrow, but all I remember of my walk from Caernarvon to Ethelgebert is that the beer at Ethelgebert was the best I ever drank.' This story has always seemed to me so human that I am now tempted to fit it into this narrative, turning excellent beer into tea so delicious that its flavour lingers for ever in the palate. But if I were to introduce a thread of fiction into this narrative, the weft would be torn asunder; and

anyone who knows me at all would not believe that in a cup of tea, however delicious, I could drink oblivion of the lonely ruins of the great abbey through which we wandered one evening. In the hallowed light of a dying day, voices seemed to whisper about the arches, the infoliated capitals, and the worn and broken carvings. The darkness of time seemed to lighten, and we saw monks reading and painting in their cells. Within our sight one rose, delighted, from the Scriptures—he had succeeded in clearing up in a gloss an obscure point that had troubled him for years. We watched another bent over a pattern of endless complexity; his hand moved over the parchment quickly and surely; and in the ghostly silence of the ruins, we heard the mutter of a monk scanning a poem, a saint, no doubt, that had begun to weary of the promiscuousness of a great monastery, and was meditating further retirement from the world. We rode away, thinking that his poem was in praise of some lake island, whither he would go, like Marban. Æ remembered some of Marban's lines, and he told me that they were written in the halcyon days in which Ireland lay dreaming, century after century, arriving gradually at the art of the jeweller, the illuminator, and the carver of symbols. Marban is a great poet; the lines Æ repeated to me are as native as the hazels under which the poet lived, and as sweet as the nuts he gathered from the branches.

Unlike Borrow's admirer, we rode forgetful of the excellence of the tea that the herdsman's wife had set before us, full of dreams of a forgotten civilization, each maintaining to the other that the art of ancient

Ireland must have been considerable, since a little handful has come down to us, despite the ravening Dane, and the Norman, worse than the Dane; for the Dane only destroyed, whereas the Norman came with a new culture, and just when Ireland was beginning to realize herself. If he had come a few centuries later, we should have had an art as original as the Chinese. Ireland would have found her voice, but now Ireland will never be able to justify her existence, for small countries are being absorbed one after the other, and great empires are intellectually sterile. Italy, mistress of the world, produced no art worth speaking about, but when Italy was divided into numberless small states, she outstripped all nations in genius, all except Greece. 'Florence compares with Athens, Michael Angelo, Donatello, Andrea del Sarto, Leonardo da Vinci, and how many more? There can be no doubt, Æ, that Empire is fatal to art. England produced Shakespeare, and the British Empire the six-shilling novel. Think, Æ, of living in a world without art?' And the thought was so painful that I could not speak again.

The miles flowed under our wheels. We had come so far that it seemed as if we might go on for another hundred miles without feeling tired, and the day, too, seemed as if it could not tire and darken into night. There was no sign of night in the sky, but the earth was darkening under the tall hedges; we passed a girl driving her cows homeward. She drew her shawl over her head, and I said that I remembered having seen her long ago in Mayo, and Æ answered, 'Before the tumuli, she was.'

We cycled mile after mile, descending the great

road that leads into Drogheda, and as we came down the hill we saw the lamps in the main street; all the rest of the town was lost in shadow, and beyond the town a blue background, as likely as not the sea . . . if Drogheda be a seaport town.

IV

'You've punctured!' Æ said, and I could see that he looked upon the incident as ominous. 'I can mend your puncture for you, but perhaps the quickest way will be to go back; the shop isn't more than a quarter of a mile from here.'

And in it we met a young man, who advanced to meet us on long, thin legs, his blue, Celtic eyes full of inquiry; after listening, I thought sympathetically, to my mishap (he was really thinking of something else) he asked me what he could do for me, and, on my telling him again that I had punctured, he seemed to wake up sufficiently to call his partner, a thick-set man, who seized my machine and told me that he was just tightening a gentleman's wheel for him, but it wouldn't take more than a couple of minutes. In a quarter of an hour . . . could I wait that long?

He spoke with a Lancashire burr, and I began to wonder how the Celt and the Saxon had come together, so different were they, and why the red-headed Celt lingered about the shop instead of going to the help of his fellow. And it was to escape from unpleasant thoughts of my country's idleness that I asked him if the language movement was making

progress in Dundalk; but when he told me that a branch of the Gaelic League had been started about two years ago, and that he was a constant attendant at the classes, I apologized to him, inwardly, for a hasty judgment, and, seeing in him, perhaps, a future apostle, I commenced preaching. A few people had just dropped in for a chat after dinner, and taking for my text the words that I had heard spoken on the road to Chelsea, I said:

'A few days after the voice spoke to me again, this time not out of the clouds, but within a few inches of my ear, and the words that it spoke were, "Go to Ireland, go to Ireland," and not long after this second revelation, a force completely outside of myself, compelled me to fall upon my knees, and I prayed for the first time for many years. But it was not to any Christian God that I prayed.'

Æ looked up, hoping, no doubt, that I would not shock the young man's Catholic susceptibilities to the point of his asking me to leave his shop; and, thinking that in saying I had not prayed to a Christian God I had said enough, I admitted that the future religion of Ireland was not our business, but one for the next generation to settle. Our business was to revive the Irish language, for the soul of Ireland was implicit in it, and, pulling out of my pocket a copy of the *Claidheam Soluis*, I described the aims and ambitions of the paper. But a cloud came into the young man's face and into the faces of the three or four people present, whom I invited to subscribe to it, and the thought dashed through my mind that I was being mistaken for an advertising agent, and to remove such sordid suspicion I told them that I had

no pecuniary interest in the paper whatever, but was working for the language of our forefathers, and to support this paper (the organ of the League) seemed to me part of the work I had been sent to do in Ireland. The best way to do this was by getting advertisements for the paper, and my way of getting advertisements was simple and advantageous to all parties. I had rented a house in Dublin. The roof was leaking, and a builder had to be called in; he had been given the job of repairing the roof on condition that he advertised in the *Claidheam Soluis*. The upholsterer had furnished my house under the same conditions, and as soon as I came to live in it I had gone to the butcher, the grocer, the chandler, the green-grocer, the apothecary, the baker, the tailor, the draper, the boot-maker: "You shall have my custom if you advertise in the *Claidheam Soluis*. . . . And you, sir, having bicycles to sell, might like to do business with me on the same terms.'

The young Celt agreed that he would like to do business with me, but, being somewhat slow-witted, said he must refer the matter to his partner.

'But why refer it to your partner?' I answered. 'Everybody will advertise if he is sure of getting custom. I am the only advertising agent in the world who can insure a speedy return for the money laid out.'

As the young man hesitated, Æ took me aside and reminded me that my method was not as applicable to bicycles as to furniture and food, for if I were to buy a bicycle every time I punctured I should have more machines on my hands than it would be possible for me to find use for.

'If you'll be good enough to wait till my partner comes back,' chimed in the young Celt, 'I'll be able to give you your answer.'

And when the Lancashire man came in with the bicycle on his shoulder, the conditions of sale were explained to him (conditions which I could see by the partner's face, he was quite willing to accept).

'We shan't get to Slievegullion to-day if you don't hasten,' Æ said; but the Lancashire man, loath to lose a chance of selling a bicycle, sent the young Celt along with us, the pretext being to put us on the right road; and we all three pedalled away together, myself riding in the middle, explaining to the young Celt that language wears out like a coat, and just as a man has to change his coat when it becomes threadbare, a nation has to change its language if it is to produce a new literature. There could be no doubt about this. Italy had produced a new literature because Italy had changed her language; whereas Greece had not changed hers, and there was no literature in Greece, and there could be none until the modern language had separated itself sufficiently from the ancient.

The young man seemed to wish to interpose a a remark, but I dashed into a new theory. Ideas were climatic; the climate of Ireland had produced certain modes of thought, and these could only transpire in the language of the country, for of course language is only the echo of the mind. The young man again tried to interpose a remark, and Æ tried, too, but neither succeeded in getting heard, for it seemed to me of primary importance to convince the young man that literary genius depended upon the

language as much as upon the writer, and Ireland was proof of it, for, though Irishmen had been speaking English for centuries, they had never mastered that language.

'If Irishmen would only read English literature, but they read the daily paper,' Æ shouted from the other side of the road.

'But, Æ, a nation reads the literature that itself produces. Ireland cannot be as much interested in Shakespeare as England is, or in the Bible, Ireland having accepted the Church of Rome, and the two ways of learning English are through the Bible and Shakespeare.'

'But there is an excellent Irish translation of the Bible, nearly as good as the English Bible,' and Æ appealed to the young Celt, who admitted that he had heard that Bedell's Bible was in very good Irish.

'But it isn't read in the classes.'

'And why isn't it read in the classes?' I asked.

"Well, you see, it was done by a Protestant.'

I screamed at him that it was ridiculous to reject good Irish because a Protestant wrote it.

'You are a native speaker, sir?'

'No,' I answered, 'I don't know any Irish.'

The young man gazed at me, and Æ began to laugh.

'You should begin to learn, and I hope you won't mind taking this little book from me; it is O'Growney's. I am in the fifth. And now,' he said, 'I don't think I can go any farther with you. The cromlech—you can't miss it when you come to the first gate on the left.'

He left us so abruptly that I could not return the

book to him, and had to put it into my pocket; and the incident amused Æ until we came to a gate about half a mile up the road, which we passed through, coming upon the altar of our forefathers in the middle of a large green field—a great rock poised upon three or four upright stones, nine or ten feet high, and one stone worn away at the base, but rebuilt by some pious hand, for the belief abides that Diarmuid and Grania slept under the cromlech in their flight from Finn.

'Traditions are often more truthful than scripts,' Æ said, and, believing in this as in everything he says, I walked round the cromlech three times, praying, and when my devotions were finished, I returned to Æ, who was putting the last touches to a beautiful drawing of the altar, a little nervous lest he should question me as to the prayers I had offered up. But instead of groping in anyone's religious belief Æ talks sympathetically of Gods ascending and descending in many-coloured spirals of flame, and of the ages before men turned from the reading of earth to the reading of scrolls and of the earth herself, the origin of all things and the miracle of miracles. Æ is extraordinarily forthcoming, and while speaking on a subject that interests him, nothing of himself remains behind, the revelation is continuous, and the belief imminent that he comes of Divine stock, and has been sent into the world on an errand.

This was my meditation as I watched him packing up his pastels. We went together to the warrior's grave at the other end of the field, and stood by it, wondering what his story might be in the beautiful

summer weather. And then my memory disappears. It emerges again some miles farther on, for we were brought to a standstill by another puncture, and this second puncture so greatly stirred Æ's fears lest the Gods did not wish to see me on the top of their mountain, that it was difficult for me to persuade him to go into the cottage for a basin of water. At last he consented, and, while he worked hard, heaving the tyre from off the wheel with many curious instruments, which he extracted from a leather pocket behind the saddle of his machine, I talked to him of Ireland, hoping thereby to distract his attention from the heat of the day. It was not difficult to do this, for Æ, like Dujardin, can be interested in ideas at any time of the day and night, though the sweat pours from his forehead; and I could see that he was listening while I told him that we should have room to dream and think in Ireland when America had drawn from us another million and a half of the population.

'Two millions is the ideal population for Ireland and about four for England. Do you know, Æ, there could not have been more than two million people in England when Robin Hood and his merry men haunted Sherwood Forest. How much more variegated the world was then! At any moment one might come upon an archer who had just split a willow wand distant a hundred yards, or upon charcoal-burners with their fingers and thumbs cut off for shooting deer, or jugglers standing on each other's heads in the middle of sunlit interspaces! A little later, on the fringe of the forest, the wayfarer stops to listen to the hymn of pilgrims on their way

to Canterbury! Oh, how beautiful is the world of vagrancy lost to us for ever, Æ!'

'There is plenty of vagrancy still in Ireland,' he answered, and we spoke seriously of the destiny of the two countries. As England had undertaken to supply Ireland with hardware, he would not hang the pall cloud of Wolverhampton over Dundalk.

'The economic conditions of the two countries are quite different,' he said, and many other interesting things which would have gladdened Plunkett's heart, but my memory curls and rushes into darkness at the word 'economic,' and a considerable time must have elapsed, for we were well on our way when I heard my own voice saying:

'Will this hill never cease?'

'We're going to Slievegullion.'

'True for you,' I said, 'for at every half-mile the road gets steeper, which I suppose is always the case when one is going towards a mountain.' But, despite the steepness which should have left no doubt upon his mind, Æ was not satisfied that we were in the right road, and he jumped off his bicycle to call to a man, who left his work willingly to come to our assistance, whether from Irish politeness or because of the heat of the day, I am still in doubt. As he came towards us his pale and perplexed eyes attracted my attention; they recalled to mind the ratlike faces with the long upper lip that used to come from the mountains to Moore Hall, with bank-notes in their tall hats, a little decaying race in knee-breeches, worsted stockings and heavy shoon, whom we used to despise because they could not speak English. Now it was the other way round; I

was angry with this little fellow because he had no Irish. But his father, he said, was a great Irish speaker, and he would have told us the story of the decline of the language in the district if Æ had not suddenly interrupted him with questions regarding the distance to Slievegullion.

'If it's to the tip-top you're thinking of going, about another four miles,' and he told us we would come upon a cabin about half a mile up the road, and the woman in it would mind our bicycles while we were at the top of the hill, and from her house he had always heard that it was three miles to the top of the mountain; that was how he reckoned it was four miles from where we stood to the lake. He had never been to the top of Slievegullion himself, but he had heard of the lake from those that had been up there, and he thought that he had heard of Finn from his father, but he disremembered if Finn had plunged into the lake after some beautiful queen.

'Things that have lived too long in the same place become melancholy, Æ. Let him emigrate. He is no use to us. He has forgotten his Irish and the old stories that carried the soul of the ancient Gael right down to the present generation. I'm afraid, Æ, that ancient Ireland died at the beginning of the nineteenth century and beyond hope of resurrection.'

Æ was thinking at that moment if the peasant had directed us rightly, and impatient for an answer I continued:

'Can the dreams, the aspirations and traditions of the ancient Gael be translated into English?' And

being easily cast down, I asked if the beliefs of the ancient Gael were not a part of his civilization and have lost all meaning for us?

'That would be so,' Æ answered, 'if truth were a casual thing of to-day and to-morrow, but men knew the great truths thousands of years ago, and it seems to me that these truths are returning, and that we shall soon possess them, not perhaps exactly as the ancient Gael——'

'I hope that you are right, Æ, for all my life is engaged in this adventure. I think that you are right, and that the ancient Gael was nearer to Nature than we have ever been since we turned for inspiration to Galilee.'

'The fault I find with Christianity is that it is no more than a code of morals, whereas three things are required for a religion—a cosmogony, a psychology and a moral code.'

'I'm sure you're right, Æ, but the heat is so great that I feel I cannot push this bicycle up the hill any farther. You must wait for me till I take off my drawers.' And behind a hedge I rid myself of them. 'You were telling me that the dreams and aspirations and visions of the Celtic race have lost none of their ancient power as they descended from generation to generation.'

'I don't think they have.' And I listened to him telling how these have crept through dream after dream of the manifold nature of man, and how each dream, heroism, or beauty, has laid itself nigh the Divine power it represents. Deirdre was like Helen. . . . It went to my heart to interrupt him, but the heat was so great that to listen to him as I must,

with all my soul, I must rid myself of the rest of my hosiery, and so again retired behind a hedge, and, returning with nothing on my moist body but a pair of trousers and a shirt, I leaned over the handle-bars, and by putting forth all my strength, mental as well as physical, contrived to reach the cottage.

We left our bicycles with the woman of the house and started for the top of the mountain. The spare, scant fields were cracked and hot underfoot, but Æ seemed unaware of any physical discomfort. Miraculously sustained by the hope of reaching the sacred lake, he hopped over the walls dividing the fields like a goat, though these were built out of loose stones, every one as hot as if it had just come out of a fire; and I heard him say, as I fell back exhausted among some brambles, that man was not a momentary seeming but a pilgrim of eternity.

'What is the matter, Moore? Can't you get up?'

'I am unbearably tired, Æ, and the heat is so great that I can't get over this wall.'

'Take a little rest, and then you'll be able to come along with me.'

'No, no, Æ, I'm certain that to-day it would be impossible, all the way up that mountain, a long struggle over stones and through heather. No, no! If there were a donkey or a pony!'

Æ conjured me to rise.

'I'm sorry, but I can't. It is very unfortunate, for you will see Finn, and I might see him, too, whether in the spirit or in the flesh I know not; we should come down from that mountain different beings, that I know; but it's impossible.'

'Get up. I tell you to get up. You must get up.'

A lithe figure in grey clothes and an old brown hat bade me arise and walk; his shining grey eyes were filled with all the will he had taught himself to concentrate when, after a long day's work at Pim's as accountant, he retired to his little room and communicated with Weekes and Johnson, though they were hundreds of miles away; but, great as the force of his will undoubtedly is, he could not infuse in me sufficient energy to proceed; my body remained inert, and he left me, saying that alone he would climb the mountain, and I saw him going away, and the gritty and grimy mountain showing aloft in ugly outline upon a burning sky.

'Going to see Finn,' I murmured. 'I would sit with him by the holy lake waiting for the vision; but I may not get there. Two hours' climb! I couldn't, I couldn't! He'll certainly spend an hour by the lake, and he will take two hours to come back, and all that time I shall sit in a baking field. O, Lord!' Catching sight of some hazels growing in the corner of the field, I struggled to my feet. But there was no shade to speak of in the hazel copse, and my feet were burnt by the sun striking through the scanty leafage. My tongue was like a dry stick, and the touch of the hazel leaves put my teeth on edge, and, remembering that Æ would be away for hours, I walked across the field towards the cottage where we had left our bicycles.

'May I have a drink of water?' I asked, looking over the half-door.

Two women came out of the gloom, and, after talking between themselves, one of them asked

wouldn't I rather have a drop of milk?—a fine-looking girl with soft grey eyes and a friendly manner; the other was a rougher, an uglier sort.

I drank from the bowl, and could have easily finished the milk, but lifting my eyes suddenly I caught sight of a flat-faced child with flaxen hair all in curl watching me, and it occurring to me at that moment that it might be his milk I was drinking, I put down the bowl and my hand went to my pocket.

'How much is the milk?'

'You're heartily welcome to it, sir,' the young woman answered. 'Sure, it was only a sup.'

'No, I must pay you.'

But all my money had been left in Dundalk, and I stood penniless before these poor people, having drunk their milk.

'My friend will come from the mountain to fetch his bicycle, and he will pay you.' Again the young woman said I was welcome to the milk; but I didn't know that Æ had any money upon him, and it occurred to me to offer her my vest and drawers. She said she couldn't think of taking them, eyeing them all the while. At last she took them and asked me to sit down and take the weight off my limbs. 'Thank you kindly,' and, sitting on the proffered stool, I asked if they were Irish speakers.

'Himself's mother can speak it,' and I turned towards the old woman who sat by the ashes of a peat fire, her yellow hands hanging over her knees, her thick white hair showing under a black knitted cap. Her eyes never left me, but she made no attempt to answer my questions. 'She's gone a

little bothered lately and wouldn't know what you'd be asking her.' I could make nothing of the younger women, the child and the grandmother only stared. It was like being in a den with some shy animals, so I left a message with them for Æ, that I would bicycle on to Dundalk very slowly, and hoped he would overtake me. And it was about two hours after he came up with me, not a bit tired after his long walk, and very willing to tell me how he had had to rest under the rocks on his way to the summit, enduring dreadful thirst, for there was no rill; all were dry, and he had been glad to dip his hat into the lake and drink the soft bog water, and then to lie at length among the heather. So intense was the silence that his thoughts were afraid to move, and he lay, his eyes roving over boundless space, seeing nothing but the phantom tops of distant mountains, the outer rim of the world, so did they seem to him. At each end of the crescent-shaped lake there is a great cairn built of cyclopean stones; and into one of these cairns he had descended and had followed the passage leading into the heart of the mountain till he came upon a great boulder, which twenty men could not move, and which looked as if it had been hurled by some giant down there.

'Perchance to save the Druid mysteries from curious eyes,' I said, and a great regret welled up in me that I had not been strong enough to climb that mountain with him. 'What have I missed, Æ? Oh, what have I missed?' And as if to console me for my weakness Æ told me that he had made a drawing of the cairn, which he would show me as

soon as we reached Dundalk. All the while I was afraid to ask him if he had seen Finn, for if he had seen the hero plunge into the lake after the queen's white limbs, I should have looked upon myself as among the most unfortunate of men. But Æ had not seen Finn. He spoke of alien influences, and as we rode down the long roads under the deepening sky, we wondered how the powers of the material world could have reached as far as the sacred lake, violating even the mysterious silence that sings about the Gods. That the silence of the lake had been violated was certain, for the trance that was beginning to gather melted away; his eyes had opened in the knowledge that the Gods were no longer by him, and, seeing that the evening was gathering on the mountain he had packed up his drawings.

'But the night will be starlit. If I had been able to get there I shouldn't have minded waiting. Were you on the mountain, now, Æ, you would be seeing that horned moon reflected in the crescent-shaped lake. It was faint-hearted of you.'

At that moment two broad backs bicycling in front of us explained the sudden withdrawal of the Gods. Our two Christian wayfarers had been prowling about Slievegullion, and our wheels had not revolved many times before we had overtaken them.

'We meet again, sir, and your day has been a pleasant one, I hope?'

'It has been very hot,' he answered, 'too hot for Slievegullion. We couldn't get more than half-way It was my friend that sat down overcome by the heat.'

Æ began to laugh.

'What is your friend laughing at?'

And the story of how my strength had failed me at the third wall was told.

'I quite sympathize with you,' said the one that had been overtaken like myself from the heat. 'Did the poet get to the top?'

'Yes, he did,' I replied sharply.

'And did the view compensate you for the walk?'

'There is no view,' Æ answered; 'only a rim of pearl-coloured mountains, the edge of the world they seemed, and an intense silence.'

'That isn't enough to climb a thousand feet for,' said the chubbier of the two.

'But it wasn't for the view he went there,' I replied indignantly, 'but for the Gods.'

'For the Gods!'

'And why not? Are there no Gods but your's?'

My question was not answered and at the end of an awkward silence we talked about indifferent things till we came to Dundalk, where we happened to be staying at the same inn, and Æ suggested that we should ask the Presbyterians to dine with us, having in mind not the dinner but the supper of ideas which he was preparing for them; and that supper began with the dinner; even before the arrival of the chops they were being told that Slievegullion was the most celebrated mountain in all Celtic theology, and enveloped in the most beautiful gospels. It distressed me to see Æ neglect his dinner, and I insisted that he must finish his chop before he unpacked his portfolio and showed the

drawing he had made of the crescent-shaped lake. He ate for a little while, but it was impossible to restrain him from telling how Finn had seen a fairy face rise above the waters of the lake and had plunged after it. Whether Finn captured the nymph, and for how long he had enjoyed her, he did not tell, only that when Finn rose to the surface again he was an old man, old as the mountains and the rocks of the world. But his youth was given back to him by enchantment, and of the adventure nothing remained except his snow-white hair, which was so beautiful and became him so well, that it had not been altered back to its original colour. It was on this mountain that Cuchulain had found the fabled horse, Leath Macha, and Æ told us, in language which still rings in my memory, of the great battle of the ford and the giant chivalry of the Ultonians. He spoke to us of the untamable manhood, and of the exploits of Cuchulain, and the children of Rury, 'more admirable,' he said, 'as types, more noble and inspiring than the hierarchy of little saints who came later and cursed their memories.'

This last passage seemed to conciliate the Presbyterians; they looked approvingly; but Æ's soul refuses to recognize the miserable disputes of certain Christian sects. He was thinking of Choulain, the smith, who lived in the mountain and who forged the Ultonians their armour. And when that story had been related he remembered that he had not told them of Manaanan MacLir, the most remote and most spiritual of all Gaelic divinities, the uttermost God, of the Feast of Age, the Druid counterpart of

the mysteries, and how anyone who partook of that Feast became himself immortal.

It is a great grief to me that no single note was taken at the time of that extraordinary evening spent with Æ in the inn at Dundalk, eating hard chops and drinking stale beer. The fare was poor, but what thoughts and what eloquence! A short-hand writer should have been by me. She is never with us when she should be. I might have gone to my room and taken notes, but no note was taken, alas! . . . A change came into the faces of the Presbyterians as they listened to Æ; even their attitudes seemed to become noble. Æ did not see them; he was too absorbed in his ideas; but I saw them, and thought the while of barren rocks that the sun gilds for a moment. And then, not satisfied with that simile, I thought how at midday a ray finds its way even into the darkest valley. We had remained in the valley of the senses—our weak flesh had kept us there, but Æ had ascended the mountain of the spirit and a Divine light was about him. It is the mission of some men to enable their fellows to live beyond themselves. Æ possesses this power in an extraordinary degree, and we were lifted above ourselves.

My memory of that evening is one which Time is powerless to efface, and though years have passed by, the moment is remembered when Æ said that religion must always be exotic which makes a far-off land sacred rather than the earth underfoot; and then he denied that the Genius of the Gael had ever owed any of its inspiration to priestly teaching. Its own folk-tales—our talk is always reported incorrectly,

and in these memories of Æ there must be a great deal of myself, it sounds so like myself, that I hesitate to attribute this sentence to him; yet it seems to me that I can still hear him speaking it—the folk-tales of Connaught have ever lain nearer to the hearts of the people than those of Galilee. Whatever there is of worth in Celtic song and story is woven into them, imagery handed down from the dim Druidic ages. And did I not hear him say that soon the children of Eri, a new race, shall roll out their thoughts on the hillsides before your very doors, O priests! calling your flocks from your dark chapels and twilit sanctuaries to a temple not built with hands, sunlit, starlit, sweet with the odour and incense of earth, from your altars call them to the altars of the hills, soon to be lit up as of old, soon to be blazing torches of God over the land. These heroes I see emerging. Have they not come forth in every land and race when there was need? Here, too, they will arise. My ears retain memories of his voice when he cried, 'Ah, my darlings, you will have to fight and suffer; you must endure loneliness, the coldness of friends, the alienation of love, warmed only by the bright interior hope of a future you must toil for but may never see, letting the deed be its own reward; laying in dark places the foundations of that high and holy Eri of prophecy, the isle of enchantment, burning with Druidic splendours, bright with immortal presences, with the face of the everlasting Beauty looking in upon all its ways, Divine with terrestrial mingling till God and the world are one.'

But how much more eloquent were thy words

than any that my memory recalls! Yet sometimes it seems to me that thy words have floated back almost as thou didst speak them, aggravating the calumny of an imperfect record. But for the record to be perfect the accent of thy voice and the light in thine eyes, and the whole scene—the maculated tablecloth, the chops, everything would have to be reproduced. How vain is art! That hour in the inn in Dundalk is lost for ever—the drifting of the ministers to their beds. Faint, indeed, is the memory of their passing, so faint that it will be better not to attempt to record it, but to pass on to another event, to the portrait which Æ drew that evening; for, kept awake by the presences of the Gods on the mountain, he said he must do a portrait of me, and the portrait is a better record of the dream that he brought down with him from the mountain than any words of mine. It hangs in a house in Galway, and it is clearly the work of one who has been with the Gods, for in it my hair is hyacinthine and my eyes are full of holy light. The portrait was executed in an hour, and even this work could not quell Æ's ardour. He would have sat up till morning had I allowed him, telling me his theory of numbers, but I said:

'Suppose we reserve that theory for to-morrow? Sufficient for the day is the blessing thereof.'

V

A suspicion stops my pen that I am caricaturing Æ, setting him forth like the hero of a girl's imagination. It may be that this criticism is not altogether unfounded, and to redeem my portrait I will tell how I saw Æ roused like a lion out of his lair. A man sitting opposite to him in the railway carriage began to lament that Queen Victoria had not been received with more profuse expressions of loyalty; Æ took this West Briton very gently at first, getting him to define what he meant by the word 'loyalty,' and, when it transpired that the stranger attached the same meaning to the word as the newspapers, that, for him, as for the newspapers, a queen or king is a fetish, an idol, an effigy, a thing for men to hail and to bow before, he burst out into a fiery denunciation of this base and witless conception of loyalty, as insulting to the worshipped as to the worshipper. The man quailed before Æ's face, so stern was it; Æ's eyes flashed, and a torrent of righteous indignation poured from his lips, and I admired his chivalrous respect for his foe, feeling sure that if the fight had been fought out with swords Æ would not have forgotten that he is himself an Ultonian. If I had been in his place I should certainly have insulted the West Briton and made him feel that his soul was base, but Æ, while fiercely defending his principles, appealed to the man's deeper nature, assuming that it was as deep as his own, and I remember him saying, 'In your heart you think as I do, but, shocked at the desire of some people to affront an aged woman, you fall into the

other extreme, and would like to see the Irish race dig a hole and hide itself, leaving nothing of itself above ground but an insinuating tail.'

My ears keep the very words he uttered, as the shell keeps the sound of the sea, and I can still hear our good-bye at the corner of Hume Street, and still feel the sadness that I felt as I rode through the gateway into my little cul-de-sac. Four such beautiful days I shall never have again. Every enchantment brings a feeling of sadness in its train; we know that something is over, that part of our life is behind us, never to be recaptured. But, though these days were over, other days with Æ would come, and, dropping into an arm-chair, I began to rejoice in the memory of Æ's wonderful awakening of self-respect in the man whose ambition it was to abase himself before his fellow. He can be severe enough when the occasion requires it, and I remembered his severities towards me the moment I showed any desire to pluck a single leaf from the crown he was weaving for Plunkett. 'Plunkett! Plunkett!' is his cry all over Ireland, and I fell to thinking how to-morrow morning, without a thought for himself he would trundle his old bicycle down to the offices of the I.A.O.S. in Lincoln Place, to take his orders from Anderson.

But there must be some readers who cannot translate these letters into the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, and who know nothing of the Society, when it was founded, or for what purpose it exists. The best story in the world becomes the worst if the narrator is not careful to explain certain essential facts that will enable his listeners to understand it. So here goes.

Years ago the idea of co-operation overtook Plunkett in America. It is unnecessary to inquire out whether he had seen co-operation at work in America, or had read a book in America, or had spoken to somebody in America, or had dreamed a dream in America. Suffice it to say that he hurried home, anxious to tell it to his countrymen, and travelled all over Ireland, telling farmers at more than a hundred meetings that through co-operation they would be able to get unadulterated manure at forty per cent. less than they were paying the gombeen man for rubbish. At more than a hundred meetings he told the farmers that a foreign country was exploiting the dairy industry that rightly belonged to Ireland, and that the Dane was doing this successfully because he had learned to do his own business for himself—a very simple idea, almost a platitude, but Plunkett had the courage of his platitudes, and preached them in and out of season, without, however, making a single convert. Some time after he chanced on Anderson, a man with a gift of organization and an exact knowledge of Irish rural life, two things Plunkett did not possess, but which he knew were necessary for his enterprise. Away they went together, and they preached, and they preached, and back they came together to Dublin, feeling that something was wanting, something which they had not gotten. What was it? Neither could say. Plunkett looked into Anderson's eyes, and Anderson looked into Plunkett's. At last Anderson said: 'The idea is right enough, but——' And Plunkett answered 'Yes, Anderson.'

Plunkett had brought the skeleton; Anderson had

brought the flesh; but the body lay stark, and all their efforts to breathe life into it were so unavailing that they had ceased to try. They walked round their dead idea, or perhaps I should say the idea that had not yet come to life; they watched by it, and they bemoaned its inaction night and day. Plunkett chanted the litany of the economic man and the uneconomic holding, and when he had finished Anderson chanted the litany of the uneconomic man and the economic holding, and this continued until their chants brought out of the brushwood a tall figure, wearing a long black cloak, with a manuscript sticking out of the pocket. He asked them what they were doing, and they said, 'Trying to revive Ireland.' 'But Ireland is deaf,' he answered, 'she is deaf to your economics, for you do not know her folk-tales, and cannot croon them by the firesides.' Plunkett looked at Anderson, and took Yeats for a little trip on an outside car through a mountainous district. It appears that Plunkett was, unfortunately, suffering from toothache, and only half-listened to Yeats, who was telling him across the car that he was going to make his speech more interesting by introducing into it the folk-tales that the people for generation after generation had been telling over their firesides. And, for example, he told how three men in a barn were playing cards, and so intently, that they did not perceive that a hare with a white ear jumped out of the cards and ran out of the door and away over the hills. More cards were dealt, and then a greyhound jumped out of the cards and ran out of the door after the hare. The story was symbolical of man's desire; Plunkett understood co-operation, and Yeats may have

mentioned the blessed word, but at the meeting it was a boar without bristles that rushed out of the cards, and went away into the East, rooting the sun and the moon and the stars out of the sky. And while Plunkett was wondering why this story should portend co-operative movement, a voice from the back of the hall cried out, 'The blessings of God on him if he rooted up Limerick. A bad day it was for us ——' and a murmur began at the back of the hall. Yeats's allusion to the pig was an unfortunate one; the people had lost a great deal of money by following Plunkett's advice to send their pigs to Limerick. It was quite true that Limerick gave better prices for pigs than the jobbers, but only for the pigs that it wanted. Yeats, however, is an accomplished platform speaker, and not easily cowed, and he soon recaptured the attention of the audience. 'We always know,' he said, 'when we are among our own people.' That pleased everybody; and Plunkett had to admit that the meeting had gone better than usual. A poet was necessary, that was clear, but he did not think that Yeats was exactly the poet they wanted. If they could get a poet with some knowledge of detail (Plunkett reserved the right to dream to himself), the country might be awakened to the advantages of co-operation.

'I think I know somebody,' Yeats answered, 'who might suit you.' Plunkett and Anderson forthwith lent their ears to the story of a young man, a poet, who was at present earning his living as accountant in Pim's. 'A poet-accountant sounds well,' Plunkett muttered, and looked at Anderson, and Anderson nodded significantly; and Yeats murmured some

phrase about beautiful verses, and seemed to lose himself; but Anderson woke him up, and said: 'Tell us about this young man. Why do you think he would suit us?'

'Well,' said Yeats, 'his personal influence pervades the whole shop, from the smallest clerk up to the manager, and all eyes go to him when he passes.' Plunkett and Anderson looked across the table at each other, and Yeats went on to tell a story, how a young man, a ne'er-do-well, had once seen Æ crossing from one desk to another with some papers in his hand, and had gone to him, saying, 'Something tells me you are the man who may redeem me.' Plunkett and Anderson frowned a little, for they foresaw a preacher; and Yeats, guessing what was in Anderson's mind, said:

'What will surprise you is that he never preaches. The influence he exercises is entirely involuntary. He told the young man that if he came round to see him he would introduce him to new friends. He is at present running a theosophical society, and the young man came, and heard Æ talking, and forthwith beat his wife no more, forswore the public-house and is now an admirable member of society.'

There was no further doubt in the minds of Plunkett and Anderson that Æ was the man they wanted. Plunkett sent him an invitation to come to see him, and the Æ that appeared did not correspond in the least with the conception that Plunkett and Anderson had formed from Yeats' description. They saw a tall, thin man, overflowing with wild humour; the ends of his eyes went up and he seemed to them like a kindly satyr, something that had not

yet experienced civilization, for the first stipulation was that he should not receive more than three pounds a week. No man's work, according to him, was worth more.

They gave him a bicycle, and he rode through Ireland, preaching the doctrine of co-operation and dairy-farming from village to village, winning friends to the movement by the personal magnetism which he exercises wherever he goes, and the eloquence of his belief in Plunkett. As soon as he arrived in a village everybody's heart became a little warmer, a little friendlier; the sensation of isolation and loneliness which all human beings feel, thawed a little; everybody must have felt happier the night that that kindly man mounted a platform, threw back his long hair, and began to talk to them, giving them shrewd advice and making them feel that he loved them and that they were not unworthy of his love. The only house in the poor village in which he could lodge would be the priest's house, and the lonely village priest, who does not meet a friend with whom he can exchange an idea once every three months, would spend a memorable evening with Æ. The priests in these villages have little bookshelves along their rooms, and Æ would go to these shelves and find a book that had not interested the priest since the enthusiasm of his youth had died down; he would open this book, and read passages, and awaken the heart of the priest. In the morning the old bicycle would be brought out, and away Æ would go, and the priest, I am sure, looked after him, sorry that he was going. Protestants, Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists—all united in loving Æ. Although other

things might be wrong, one thing was right—Æ; and they followed him, captivated by the tune he played on his pipes, and before the year was out the skeleton that was Plunkett's, and the flesh and the muscles that were Anderson's began to stir. The watchers called to each other. 'Anderson, see, it has shifted its leg!' 'Plunkett, see, it has moved an inch; life is creeping over it, from the crown of its head to the sole of its feet.' Creameries were springing up in every part of the country, and then Plunkett conceived again. A great State Department must be created, to direct, but not to supplant, the original movement.

He was a member for South Dublin, and on the friendliest terms with the Unionist Government, so he had no difficulty in forming a committee to inquire into what had been done on the Continent for the co-ordination of State and voluntary action. Many members of this committee were members of Parliament; the committee met during Recess, and was called the Recess Committee.

To the best of my recollection Gill's beard was being trimmed in France while the Recess Committee was forming. He was called over by Plunkett to be his secretary. Gill knew French and it was understood that he had talked co-operative economics with Frenchmen. A newspaper was required, to explain these ideas to the public. The *Express* had been purchased by Mr. Dalziel who made over the control to Plunkett; Gill was appointed editor; Rolleston, Healy, Longworth, Æ, Yeats, John Eglinton, all contributed articles; economics and folklore, Celtic and Indian gods, all went into the same pot—

an extraordinary broth very much disliked by the *Freeman's Journal* and the Parliamentary Party. Dillon made wry faces, all the same the broth was swallowed. Gerald Balfour brought in his Bill for the creation of a State Department; Plunkett was appointed Vice-President, and it was understood that the whole central authority should be in his hands, though the nominal head was the Home Secretary. About one hundred and seventy thousand a year was voted, and a great part of this money would go in providing for an immense staff of secretaries, inspectors, and lecturers. Æ could have had any one of these places for the asking, luxurious places from three hundred to a thousand a year; but he preferred to remain with the I.A.O.S. If it was not his own child, he had reared it and taught it to walk. Now should he desert it? Besides, a comfortable house and servants, a quiet walk down to his office in the morning to sign a few letters, and the quiet conviction that he is running the country by doing so, is not like Æ; his soul is too personal for office life, he must be doing his own work; the work is of different kinds, but it is always his own work. He is himself when he rides all over the country, preaching co-operation to the farmers, as much as when he returns to Dublin and begins a poem or paints a picture. Besides, the post of secretary seemed from the very beginning to belong to Gill. During the year he edited the *Express* he had prepared the public and the official mind for the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, constituted on Continental lines; but Gill had been a Plan-of-Campaigner, and a Nationalist member of

Parliament, and at Tillyra, while the adaptation of 'The Tale of a Town' was in progress, Gill's dilemma was often under consideration. Edward was a large recipient of his confidences and often spoke to me, and very seriously, on the matter. He believed Gill to be, if not in the flesh, at least in the spirit a member of the Parliamentary Party, and his unalterable opinion was that a Nationalist should never accept office under an English Government. But it seemed to me that Gill would act very unwisely if he refused the Secretaryship, and I think I remember saying to Edward that Gill should have consulted me instead, for he would have gotten from me the advice that would have been agreeable to him—'to take the primrose path, the scent of which is already in his nostrils.' One of the charms of Edward's character is its simplicity; he knows so little about life that it was a surprise to him to hear that men do not consult their friends when their determination is to walk in the thorny path.

'The martyr,' I said, 'doesn't consult among his brethren; his resolve hardens in the loneliness of his heart.'

'I see what you mean—I see what you mean,' Edward answered. 'So then you think——'

'No, my dear Edward, we are among the complexities of human nature. Our hesitations continue, even though we know, in our sub-consciousness, that the end is decreed. Gill's nationalism is quite sincere; the flame doesn't burn very fiercely, but then his nature is not a great nature like Davitt's, and our natures give—overlook the platitude—only what they

are capable of giving. But though a flame throw out little heat and light, it is a flame for all that, and the faintest flame is worthy of our respect.'

'All the same, I don't think that a Nationalist should ever take office from the English Government,' and Edward marched off to his tower to reconsider his third act, which Yeats and I had agreed he never would be able to write satisfactorily. Gill came to Tillyra a little before Edward's play was finally refused by Yeats and myself, and seated himself firmly on the fence, as is his wont. Edward, I believe, continued to consult him regarding the revisions Yeats and I were daily proposing. All the same, his name was omitted from that part of my narrative—he seemed a side issue—and in Dublin I was obliged to cast him out again. But now my narrative demands his presence and his voice, and I hasten to tell that as soon as Edward left me in Merrion Street (the reader remembers that he refused to advise me regarding the political situation), Gill's name occurred to me; he seemed to be, on the instant, the very person who could guide me through the maze of Irish political intrigue, and my steps turned mechanically from the Shelbourne Hotel, whither I was going, towards Clare Street. A few minutes later I was on Gill's door-step asking myself why Gill had chosen to confide in Edward rather than in me, and hoping for a long talk with him, after the reading of the play. Scruples of conscience are my speciality, and I was genuinely concerned about his future, being naturally *très bon pour la vie*, that is to say, *très officieux aux voisins*. On the doorstep it seemed to me that he was bound to consider not only

himself but his wife and his children. My thoughts turned about them while I read the play, and when the reading was over, for Gill's talk threw no light upon the political questions that then agitated Ireland. He is always diffuse and vague without much power of concentration, but that night it was easy to see that his thoughts were elsewhere. 'He will confide in me presently,' I said, and, to lead him into confidence, I spoke of the *Express*, which had then spent all the capital that had been advanced by Mr. Dalziel. It was not likely that Horace Plunkett would put any more capital into the newspaper, and, after a little discourse as to what might be done with this newspaper, if a capitalist could be found, Gill mentioned that he had been offered the post of Secretary to the Department.

'That's the best bit of news I've heard this long while. Edward told me that you had consulted him, but he thinks that, on account of the pledge——'

'I am no longer a member of Parliament, but my sympathies are with my friend, John Redmond, who, to take the rough with the smooth, seems to be doing very well.'

'But, Gill, Edward and some others who advised you against accepting the post haven't considered your interests.'

'And they do right,' Gill answered, 'not to consider my interests. My interests don't count with me for a moment. What I am thinking is that Plunkett may miss a magnificent chance if he has nobody by him who knows the country.'

'But Plunkett is an Irishman.'

'Plunkett is a Protestant, and a Protestant can never know Ireland.'

'A Protestant that has always lived in Ireland?'

'Even so. Ireland is Catholic if she is anything.'

'And you're a Catholic first of all, Gill, for you abandoned the Plan of Campaign when the Church condemned it.'

'Certainly I did, and what strikes me now is that it is hard if Ireland should be deprived of the labour of one of her sons because he once was. . . . I've written to Gerald Balfour on the subject,' and he rose from his chair and walked to his writing-table.

'Will you read me the letter?'

'Yes, I'll read it to you.' And when he had finished I said:

'The letter you've just read me is a very good letter, but it fills me with apprehension, for it seems to me that you leave Gerald Balfour to decide whether you should accept the appointment that he is offering you. Remember your wife and children.'

'If I were convinced that the best service I could render to Ireland——'

'But what could you do for Ireland better than to put your gift of co-ordination at the country's service?'

'Yes, co-ordination is the thing, the delegation of all detail to subordinates, reserving to oneself the consideration of the main outline, the general scheme, yet I am not sure that at the head of a great newspaper I shouldn't be able to serve Ireland better than as the Secretary of the Department. Or perhaps the great newspaper might come after the Secretaryship. It will take some years to get the Department into working order; Home Rule is bound to come

sooner or later, and the Department will create an immense batch of officials, all well equipped with ideas, and the preparation of this great machine would be a task worthy of any man's talent. When Home Rule comes there will be an immense change in the government of the country, and very likely the old civil servants will be pensioned off. If such a change were to happen it would interest me to take charge of a great daily.'

'And have you any idea of a policy for the paper? What line do you think Ireland should take in the present crisis?'

And while drawing the golden hair of his beard through his insignificant little hands, Gill began to tell me that, unlike England, Ireland had never known how to compromise. I gathered that he had been reading John Morley, and had discovered arguments that had satisfied him it would not be wise for the race, or for the individual, to persevere in the Nationalism begotten of a belief that a great European conflagration might give birth to a hero who would conquer England, and, incidentally, give Ireland her freedom. 'He is beginning to see,' I thought, 'that if the long-dreamed-of hero did arise he might propose to enlist Ireland's help for his own purposes, and not surrender her for ever to Donnybrook Fair and an eternal singing of "The Wearin' o' the Green." He has just reached the age when the Catholic Celt begins to see that, though he may continue in his belief in magicians with power to turn God into a wafer, to forgive sins and redeem souls from Purgatory, it would be wise for him to put by his dreams of Brian Boru, to keep them in the background of his

mind, a sort of Tir-nan-og into which he retires in the evening in moments of lassitude and leisure. England allows the Catholic Celt to continue his idle dreaming, knowing well that as soon as sappy youth is over he will come asking for terms. Some become policemen, some soldiers, some barristers; only a negligible minority fails to fall into line, and that is why the Celt is so ineffectual; his dreams go one way and his actions go another. But why blame the race? Every race produces more Gills than Davitts; a man like Davitt, immune from the temptations of compromise, whose ideas and whose actions are identical——'

My thoughts, breaking off, returned to Gill, and, while listening to him drawing political wisdom from the very ends of his beard, it seemed to me a pity that Edward had not confided his plot to me from the beginning, for then we should have been able to create a character quite different from Jasper Deane, and much more real. But the play would have to be finished at once, and next morning I went away to London, to patch up one that should not compromise too flagrantly Yeats' literary integrity.

It seems to me now that I have made up some arrears of story, and am free to tell that in the year 1901, when I came to live in Ireland, I found Gill the centre of the Irish Literary and Agricultural party, and looked upon by it as the one man who could weather the political peril and bring the Irish nation into port. When I arrived I found Yeats speaking of Gill as a man of very serious ability, but as if afraid lest he might compromise literature, he always added 'an excellent journalist.' Æ may have

thought with Edward that Gill should have refused the post of Secretary, but to criticize Gill's hobby for compromise would be to criticize Plunkett, and, as well as I recollect, Æ's view of the appointment was that Gill understood Catholic Ireland, and would be able to give effect to Plunkett's ideas. Edward, whenever the subject was mentioned, growled out that he had not hesitated to tell Gill when he came to him for advice, that, in his opinion, a Nationalist should never accept office from an English Government.

He rolled out this opinion like a great rock, and, after having done it, he seemed duly impressed by his own steadfastness of purpose, and his own strength of mind. It may be that abstract morality of every kind is repugnant to me, for I used to resent Edward's apothegm. Or was it that the temptation could not be resisted to measure Edward's intellect once again?

'Your political morality is of course impeccable; but, dear Edward, will you tell me why you are coming out to Dalkey on this Sunday afternoon to see Gill? Why you associate with people of whose political morality you cannot altogether approve?'

'My dear George, all my life I have lived with people whose moralities I do not approve of. You don't think that I approve of yours, do you? But, you know, I never believed that your life is anything else but pure; it is only your mind that is indecent,' and Edward laughed, enjoying himself hugely.

'As soon as you have finished your joke perhaps you'll tell me what you think Gill ought to have done?'

'I don't see why he shouldn't have got his living by journalism. He did so before.'

'But you don't know what it is to get your living by journalism; you can't, for you've got three thousand a year, or is it four? And not a wife, not even a mistress——'

'Now, George!'

As the tram passed Blackrock Catholic Church I said:

'You used to insist on sending me to Mass when I was staying with you in Galway. Do you know, Edward, that Whelan suggested he should turn the horse's head into Coole, and, while you thought we were at Mass, Yeats and I were talking over "Diarmuid and Grania"?'

A great blankness swept over Edward's face, and very often between Blackrock and Dalkey, in the pauses of our conversation, I reproached myself for having shaken his belief that he had made himself secure against God's reproaches for the conduct of his guests at Tillyra.

'Did Gill abstain from meat on Fridays when he was at Tillyra?'

'Gill is a good Catholic, but you are a bad Catholic.'

To call me a bad Catholic is one of Edward's jokes, and my retort is always that Rome would not regard me as such, that no man is answerable for his baptism.

'In calling me a bad Catholic you are very near to heresy.'

His face became grave again, and he muttered *'Mon ami Moore, mon ami Moore.'*

Old friends have always their own jokes, and this joke has tickled Edward in his sense of humour for the last twenty years or more. It appears that in a moment of intense boredom I had asked a very dignified old lady in a solemn salon in the Faubourg St. Germain '*Si elle jouait aux cartes, si elle aimait le jeu*'; and, on receiving an answer in the negative, I had replied: '*Vous aimez sans doute bien mieux, madame, le petit jeu d'amour.*' The old lady appealed to her husband, and explanations had ensued, and my friend Marshall, of 'The Confessions,' had to explain '*que son ami Moore n'a pas voulu*'—what, history does not relate.

The story has no other point except that it has tickled Edward in all his fat for twenty years, and that he regaled Gill with it that afternoon, shaking with laughter all the while, and repeating the phrase '*vous aimez sans doute, madame, le petit jeu d'amour,*' until at last, to stop him, I had to say:

'My dear Edward, I am ashamed to find you indulging in such improper conversation.

A pleasant place on Sunday afternoons was that terrace, hanging some hundred feet or more above the sea, for on that terrace between the grey house and the cliff's edge Gill often forgot that he was wise, and was willing to let us enjoy his real self, his cheerful superficial nature, a pleasant coming and going of light impressions, and this real self was to us, strenuous ones, what a quiet pool is to the thirsty deer at noontide. He reflected all our aspirations,—giving back to Yeats 'The Wanderings of Usheen,' as the one Irish epic, and to Edward 'The Heatherfield,' translated into pure Ibsen. Sometimes Æ was with

us, and I remember that he used to scan the waters of the pool eagerly for a glimpse of economic Ireland. It is a pity I forgot to look out for my own reflection. I was too anxiously engaged in admiring the reflection of others and the admirable impartiality of the pool until Edward roused it into ripples of laughter by a reproof. Gill was not bringing up his children as Irish speakers. He was going to send his boys to Trinity College, where, as Yeats said, our own folk-tales had never been crooned over the fireside. Yeats was splendid that afternoon; it was not myths from Palestine, nor from India, that had inspired the Celt, but remembrances of the many beautiful women that had lived long ago and the deeds of the heroes. Edward bit his lips at the words 'myths from Palestine,' and took me aside to confide the fact that words like these hurt him just as if he had sat upon a pin. Gill knew that such words hurt nobody, and he continued airy, cheerful, benign, until he thought it time to return to his wisdom, and then he spoke of what he thought the policy of the Gaelic League should be in Irish-speaking districts, long-drawn-out platitudes and aphorisms of lead falling from his lips; and, to escape from these, I began to take an interest in the colour and texture of his necktie, both of which were exquisite, and then in the beauty of the flight of a tired gull, floating down the quiet air to its roost among the clefts. A flutter of wings and it alighted; the fishing boats beat up to windward; and I thought of the lonely, silent night that awaited the fishers, until Edward's voice roused me from my meditations. He was telling Yeats that he liked the English language

and the Irish, but he hated the Anglo-Irish. Yeats spoke of living speech and the peasant.

'I hate the peasant,' Edward answered. 'I like the drama of intellect.'

Yeats sniggered, and a cormorant came over the sea, and alighted upon a rock, 'with a fish for the chicks in the nest,' Gill said to his children, who had come to tell him that supper was on the table. All our literary differences were laid to rest in the interest that we soon began to feel for the food. Only Æ prefers his ideas to his food; Yeats pecked, and Edward gobbled, and, looking round this happy table, it seemed to me that we liked coming to Dalkey because Gill liked to have us about him. Our pleasure was dependent on the pleasure that our host felt in our company; 'as kind-tempered a man as ever lived,' I said to myself, and listened with more indulgence to him than I had been able to show in the afternoon, when, stretched out on the sofa, he abandoned himself to memories of the days when he was a Plan-of-Campaigner. They were driving along the road on an outside car when a boy lepped out from behind a hedge and whispered 'polis!' The driver immediately turned the horse's head down the boreen, and I asked 'Was that the night you were arrested?' He told us of his trial and conviction, and we felt, despite the languor of the narrative, that he was telling us of what was most real and intense in his life. All that had gone before was a leading up to those days, and all that would come after would be mere background, very pleasant background, it is true, but still background.

Some men spend their lives watching bees and

ants, noting down the habits of these insects; my pleasure is to watch the human mind, noting how unselfish instincts rise to the surface and sink back again, making way for selfish instincts, each equally necessary, for the world would perish were it to become entirely selfish or entirely unselfish. While Gill narrated, we thought how this kindly-tempered man had floated down the tide of casual ideas into the harbour of thirteen hundred a year, 'and he has done this,' I said, 'instinctively, almost without knowing whither he was drifting; that is what is so wonderful.'

And all the way home on top of the tram we thought of Gill's kindly sympathetic nature. A few weeks later it was exhibited to me in a still more lovable light. A rumour had reached me that Æ was sick and dangerously ill with a bad cold and cough which he did not seem able to shake off, and which ——whoever brought me the news did not finish the sentence. One does not like to mention the word consumption in Ireland.

'If he starts out again on another bicycle tour, riding his old bicycle in all kinds of weathers, sleeping in any inn—you know how he neglects his food?'

'He must leave Ireland for a long holiday,' I said, and went down to see Gill.

'The shame of it, Gill, the application of the finest intelligence we have in Ireland to preaching economics in Connemara villages. Plunkett should do his own work. A great poet must needs be chosen, a great spirit! Were the moon to drop out of the sky the nights would be darker, but Dublin without Æ would be like the sky without a sun in it. Gill, come out

for a walk; this is a matter on which I must speak to you seriously.'

'It is indeed a serious matter,' Gill answered. 'I will come out with you.'

It was a great relief to me to see that my story had moved him to the very quick.

'We must get him out of the country. I know of nothing more serious than this cough and cold you speak of. How long do you say it has been upon him?'

'He has been ailing for the last six weeks, and now, in this beautiful month of July, he is lying in his bed without sufficient attendance. You know how careless he is. He will not send for a doctor, nor will he have a nurse.'

'We certainly must get him out of the country. I will devise some excuse to send him to Italy to report on——' Gill mentioned some system of agriculture which had been tried successfully in Italy, and which might be reproduced successfully here. 'But no matter whether it can or not, it will serve as an excuse, and it will be easy for me to provide for the expenses of the journey. But he'll never consent to go to Italy alone. Will you go with him?'

'Yes, I'll go with him and look after him as best I can. Three months in Italy will throw me back with my work, but never mind, *coute que coute*, I will go to Italy. And you agree with me, that Æ is the most important man in Ireland?'

VI

Sienna, Assisi, and Ravenna appeared in the imagination, and ourselves toiling up the narrow streets, talking of Raphael, and as we would return through France, we might well stop at Montauban to see Ingres at home—Raphael re-arisen after three centuries, a Raphael of finer perceptions. Æ would have been delightful on this subject, but the journey to Italy was not upon the chart of our destinies; he recovered rapidly; Plunkett arranged that he was to edit *The Homestead*, and every Saturday evening he was in my house at dinner, talking about poetry, pictures and W. B. Yeats, who came every morning to edit the dialogue I had written for *Diarmuid and Gràinia*, and to regret that I had not persevered with the French version, which Lady Gregory was to translate into English, Taidgh O'Donoghue into Irish, Lady Gregory back into English, and Yeats was to put style upon. This literary brewing used to remind Æ of an American drink:

'The bar-keeper present,
His two arms describing a crescent;'

(most readers know Bret Harte's celebrated parody); and then, feeling that he had laughed too long at his old friend, his face would become suddenly grave, and he would quote long passages from Yeats' early poems, the original and the amended versions, always preferring the original.

'That's just it,' I answered. 'The words that he likes to-day he will weary of and alter a few days afterwards.'

'Forgetting,' Æ said, 'that words wear out like everything else. He once said to me that he would like to spend the rest of his life rewriting the poems that he had already written.'

'He is a very clever man, and the worst of it is that there is something to be said for the alterations, even the most trivial. Miss Gough pointed out to me the other day that he had altered "Here is a drug that will put the Fianna to sleep" into "Here is a drug I have made sleepy." Of course it's better, more like folk, but his alterations seem to drain the text of all vitality. An operatic text is what we should be writing together, for we are always agreed about the construction, and the musician would be free from his criticism.'

Æ was not quite sure that Yeats would not want a *caoine,* and would propose to the musician a journey to Aran.

'But, Æ, we shall require some music for the play.' And in the silence that followed this remark the memory of some music I had heard long ago at Leeds, by Edward Elgar, came into my mind. 'If I knew Elgar, I'd write and ask him to send me a horn-call. Do you know, I think I will.'

'Mr. Benson,' I wrote, 'is going to produce *Diarmuid and Grania,* a drama written by Mr. Yeats and myself on the great Irish legend. Finn's horn is heard in the second act, and all my pleasure in the performance will be spoilt if a cornet-player tootles out whatever comes into his head, perhaps some vulgar phrase the audience has heard already in the streets. Beautiful phrases come into the mind while one is doing odd jobs, and if you do not

look upon my request as an impertinence, and if you will provide yourself with a sheet of music-paper before you shave in the morning, and if you do not forget the pencil, you will be able to write down a horn-call, before you turn from the right to the left cheek, that will save my play from a moment of intolerable vulgarity.'

Elgar sent me six horn-calls to choose from, and, in my letter thanking him for his courtesy, I told him of the scene in the third act, when Diarmuid, mortally wounded by the boar, asks Finn to fetch water from the spring. Finn brings it in his helmet, but, seeing that Grania and Finn stand looking at each other, Diarmuid refuses to drink. 'This, and the scene which follows, the making of the litter on which the body of Diarmuid is borne away to the funeral pyre, seem to me to crave a musical setting. It is a pity to leave such a scene unrealized; and how impressive a death-march would come after Grania's description of the burning of Diarmuid!'

Elgar wrote, asking for the act, and it went to him by the next post, but without much hope that he would write the music, it being my way always to take disappointment by the forelock, thereby softening the blows of evil fortune. And without this precautionary dose of pessimism Elgar's manuscript would not have given me anything like the pleasure that it did. I was so tired of 'thats' and 'whichs,' 'fors' and 'buts,' that I stood for a long time admiring the crotchets, the quavers, the lovely rests; and the long columns set apart for violins, columns for flutes, and further columns for oboes, fairly transported me. Elgar sent a letter with it

saying that the manuscript was the only one in existence, and that if it were lost he could not supply me with another; so it was put hurriedly under lock and key, and the rest of my day was spent going up one mean street and down another, climbing small staircases, opening bedroom doors, and meeting disappointment everywhere. At last, a tenor from a cathedral-choir was discovered, swearing from among the bedclothes that he could do musical copying with anyone in the world, and pledging his word of honour that he would be with me at ten o'clock next morning. He smelt like a corpse, but no matter, a score is a score, and Benson had to receive a copy of it within the next fortnight. The conductor at the Gaiety said he would like to copy the parts; in copying them he would learn the music, so I yielded to him Elgar's score, begging of him not to lose it, at which he laughed; and some days afterwards he said, 'Will you come up to the music-room?' and called upon his orchestra to follow. The fiddles, the horns, the clarionets, the oboes and the flutes, trooped up after us; the parts were distributed, and the conductor took up his baton.

'Of course there will be plenty of mistakes in the first reading, but we'll do our best.' He signed to the fiddles, and the slow and melancholy march began, the conductor singing the entrance of every instrument, preserving an unruffled demeanour till the horn went quack. 'We will start that again, number seventeen.' The horn again went quack, and I shall always remember how the player shook his head and looked at the conductor as if to say that the composer should have been warned that, in

such long intervals, there is no depending on the horn. When it was over, the conductor turned to me, saying:

'There's your march. What do you think of it?'

'It will have to be played better than that before I can tell,' a remark the orchestra did not like, and for which I felt sorry, but it is difficult to have the courage of one's opinions on the spot, and, while walking home, I thought of the many fine things that I might have said; that Elgar had drawn all the wail of the *caoine* into the languorous rhythm of his march, and that he had been able to do this because he had not thought for a single instant of the external forms of native music, but had allowed the sentiment of the scene to inspire him. Out of the harmony a little melody floats, pathetic as an autumn leaf, and it seemed to me that Elgar must have seen the primeval forest as he wrote, and the tribe moving among the falling leaves—oak-leaves, hazel-leaves, for the world began with oak and hazel.

His mourners—Diarmuid's mourners—were without doubt wistful folk with eyes as sad as the waters of western lakes, very like their descendants whom I found waiting for me in my dining-room. Irish speakers I knew them to be by their long upper lips, and it was almost unnecessary for them to tell me that they were the actors and actresses chosen for Dr. Hyde's play, *The Twisting of the Rope.*

'We've never acted before,' said a fine healthy countrywoman, speaking with a rich brogue. 'But we can all speak Irish.'

'I suppose you can, as you're going to act in an Irish play.'

'We mean that we are all native speakers except Miss O'Kennedy and Miss O'Sullivan, and they have learned Irish as well as you've learnt French,' she added, somewhat tartly.

'I hope they've learnt it a great deal better,' I answered, 'for I've never been able to learn that language.

'What we mean is,' said Taidgh O'Donoghue, 'that we can speak Irish fluently.'

Of course I was very anxious to know how long it would take to learn Irish perfectly, and if Miss O'Sullivan and Miss O'Kennedy knew it as well as English? We talked for about half an hour, and then they all stood up together.

'I suppose the best thing we can do is to go home and learn our parts.'

'If I am to rehearse the play I would sooner that you learnt your parts with me at rehearsal.' Again we engaged in conversation, and I learned that they all made their living by teaching Irish; pupils were waiting for them at that moment, and that was why they could not stay to tea. They would, however, meet me to-morrow evening in the rooms of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. Dr. Hyde was coming at the end of the week. And for three weeks I followed the Irish play in a translation made by Hyde himself, teaching everyone his or her part, throwing all my energy into the production, giving it as much attention as the most conscientious *régisseur* ever gave to a play at the *Françaiss*.

And while we were rehearsing *The Twisting of the Rope*, Mr. Benson was rehearsing *Diarmuid and Grania* in Birmingham. A letter came from him one morn-

ing, telling me that he did not feel altogether sure that I would be satisfied with the casting of the part of Laban, and Yeats, who sometimes attended my rehearsals, said—

'You had better go over to Birmingham and see if you can't get another woman to play the part.'

'But our play doesn't matter, Yeats; what matters is *The Twisting of the Rope*. We either want to make Irish the language of Ireland, or we don't; and if we do, nothing else matters. Hyde is excellent in his part, and if I can get the rest straightened out, and if the play be well received, the Irish language will at last have gotten its chance.'

Yeats did not take so exaggerated a view of the performance of Hyde's play as I did.

'I see that Benson says that the lady who is going to play Laban has a beautiful voice, and he suggests that you might write to Elgar, asking him if he would contribute a song to the first act.'

'The more music we get from Elgar the better. Now, Yeats, if you'll go home and write some verses and let me go on with the rehearsal, we'll send them to Elgar to-night.'

Yeats said he would see what he could do, and, to my surprise, brought back that afternoon a very pretty unrhymed lyric, nothing, however, to do with the play. It was sent to Elgar, who sent back a very beautiful melody by return of post, and both went away to Benson and were forgotten until I went to the Gaiety Theatre with Yeats to a rehearsal of our play. The lady that played Laban sang the lyric very well, but Schubert's *Ave Maria* could not have been more out of place; as for the acting—Benson was right, the lady was

not a tragic actress; even if she had been she could not have acted the part, so much was her appearance against her. She looked more like a quiet nun than a Druidess, and, drawing aside Yeats, who was telling her how she should hold a wine-cup, I said:

'It's no use, Yeats; you're only wasting time. The performance will be ridiculous.'

'Why didn't you go to Birmingham, as I asked you?'

'Because Hyde's play would have suffered. One can't have one's cake and eat it. Of course, it's dreadfully disappointing; it is quite hopeless. I shall not go to see the play to-night.'

I meant what I said, and was reading in my arm-chair about eight o'clock when Frank Fay called to tell me he was writing about the play, and would be better able to do so if I could lend him the manuscript.

'I'll try to find you one.' And after searching for some time in my secretary's room I came back with some loose sheets. 'This is the best I can do for you,' I said, bidding him good-bye.

'But aren't you coming to the theatre?'

'No. I saw the play rehearsed this afternoon. Benson is very good as Diarmuid, and I like Mrs. Benson. Rodney plays the part of Finn. He is one of the best actors in England, and Conan will please you.' . . .

'Then why won't you come?'

'The lady that plays Laban sings a ballad very beautifully in the first act; but——'

'You will come to see your play. You won't sit here all night. . . . No, you'll come.'

'For nothing in the world; I couldn't bear it!' All the same he succeeded in persuading me.

VII

'But who is Frank Fay?' the reader asks. In the days of *Diarmuid and Grania* he was earning his living as a shorthand writer and typist in an accountant's office, and when his day's work was over he went to the National Library to read books on stage history. His brother Willie was a clerk in some gas-works, and painted scenery when his work was over, and both brothers, whenever the opportunity offered, were ready to arrange for the performances of sketches, farces, one-act plays in temperance halls. But *Box and Cox* did not satisfy their ambitions; and the enthusiasm which *The Twisting of the Rope* had evoked brought Willie Fay to my house one evening, to ask me if I would use my influence with the Gaelic League to send himself and his brother out, with a little stock company, to play an equal number of plays in English and Irish.

'But do you know Irish sufficiently?'

He admitted that neither of them had any Irish at all, and my brow clouded.

'We must have a few plays in English; we wouldn't always be sure of an Irish-speaking audience.'

'If English plays are allowed, precedence will be given to them. The line of least resistance,' I said; but the idea of a stock company travelling all over the country seemed an excellent one, and I promised that on the morrow, as soon as I had finished my writing, I would go down to the Gaelic League offices and lay the project before the secretary.

We writers are always glad of any little excuse for an afternoon walk. Our brains are exhausted after five or six hours of composition, and the question arises how are the hours before dinner to be whiled away, and the hours after dinner, for if we go to bed before twelve we may lie awake thinking of what we have written during the day, and of what we hope to write on the morrow. The reader sees us spending our evenings reading, but we have read all the books that we want to read; the modern theatre is merely servant-girlism (I make no difference between the kitchen and the drawing-room variety). After forty, shooting and hunting amuse us no longer, and women, though still enchanting, are not quite so enchanting as they used to be. There's one. . . . She turned round the corner into Baggot Street, and I stood hesitating between a choice of ways. The Green tempted me, and I thought of Grafton Street and of the women running in and out of its shops, and after each other, talking and gathering up the finery which brings the young barristers from the Courts—spruce young fellows, whom I had often seen in little groups of threes and fours, each one trying to look as if he were busy disentangling some knotty point of law, but thinking all the while of his coloured socks and of the women going by. In Grafton Street I should meet little Tommy O'Shaughnessy on his way home from Green Street Court House which he never really leaves, talking to himself, and tapping his snuff-box from time to time; and Gill would be floating along there, lost in admiration of his own wisdom. Sir Thornley Stoker rarely misses Grafton Street between four and five; I should certainly catch

sight of him hopping about a silversmith's, like an old magpie, prying out spoons and forks, and the immodest bulk of Larky Waldron, waiting outside for him, looking into the window. A hundred other odds and oddments I should meet there, everyone amusing to see and to hear; all the same for a change of spectacle it might be as well to stroll to the Gaelic League offices through Merrion Street and along Nassau Street. I should meet students on their way to the National Library, girls and boys, and an old derelict Jesuit whom I liked to see going by in his threadbare coat, tightly buttoned, a great Irish scholar; and then there are the clerics to see, out for their afternoon walks, with perhaps a glimpse of Edward talking to them. He always says that he likes Bohemians or priests. The rural clergy tell him about the country, and he tells the urban priest that he has very nearly succeeded in inveigling Archbishop Walsh into accepting ten thousand pounds for the establishment of a choir to sing Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso. The priests go away, smiling inwardly, thinking him a little eccentric, but a very good Catholic. If Edward is out of town and my taste runs that day towards trees and greenswards, all I have to do is to go down Leinster Street and through a gateway into Trinity College Gardens. Professor Mahaffy sometimes walks in the path under the railings shaded by beautiful trees, and if it had not been for a ferocious article published at the time, attacking him for his lack of sympathy for the Gaelic Movement we might have spent many pleasant hours together under the hawthorns. Professor Tyrrell's hostility to our movement was less

aggressive, and I liked to meet him in the gardens, and to walk a little way with him, listening to his pleasant ancient warble about the literature that he has lived in all his life, and with which he is so saturated that, involuntarily, he transports me out of the grey modern day to Athens, where Aristophanes walked to the Piræus to watch for the galleys from Sicily.

If these two men are not about, there are other professors, and I have often been through the gardens talking with the fellow that teaches French. He is of course, learned in Corneille, Racine and Ronsard, and, by some strange chance, he knows Stuart Merrill, a poet of some distinction, a contributor to the old *Revue Indépendante*, Dujardin's *Revue*, but unfortunately he never met Dujardin, and as it is impossible to talk of Stuart Merrill for more than half an hour, he was generally sent away at Carlisle Bridge. On the other side one was sure to run up against Taidgh O'Donoghue, the modern Irish poet, the rival of the Munster poets of the eighteenth century, and my Irish translator, though O'Neill Russell had begged me to beware of him, saying that the Irish that Taidgh wrote would not be understood out of Munster—a libel on the Irish language, proved to be one soon after the arrival of a boy from Galway, my nephew's Irish tutor, for Comber, who had never been out of Galway before, understood every word of Taidgh's beautiful translation of my story, 'The Wedding Gown.'

A great old cock was O'Neill Russell, whom we never looked upon as an old man, despite his eighty years. How could we, since he was straight as a

maypole, and went for walks of two-and-twenty miles among the Dublin mountains? He came back to me one day after one of these strolls, the news bubbling upon his lips that he had composed an entire scenario on the subject of an heroic adventure that had happened to an Irish king in the thirteenth century; but he would not stay to dinner, nor even to relate it; he was in too great a hurry to verify a fact in the National Library, to get his scenario down on paper. For one reason or another he never dined at my house, though he liked to come in after dinner for a talk on Saturday nights. It was no use offering him a cigar, he always begged to be allowed to smoke his pipe, and there being no spittoons in my dining-room the coal-scuttle was put by him. A great old cock, head up-reared, fine neck, grand shoulders, a stately piece of architecture, fine in detail as in general effect. A big nose divided the face, wandering grey eyes lit it. The large hands had worked for sixty years in America, in France, in the East. He had been all over the world, and had returned to Ireland with some seventy, eighty, perhaps a hundred pounds a year. He was gibed in songs, for he had gone away as a boy, speaking bad Irish, and come back after sixty years, 'speaking bad Irish still'; so said the song's refrain, and a story followed at his heels that he had vilified a man for twenty years in the American newspapers, denouncing him as a renegade Irishman, because he had advocated a certain use of the genitive. A great old cock, as young as the youngest of the men that came to my house, were it not for a certain sadness—a very beautiful sadness, not for himself,

but for his country. He had hoped all his life for Ireland's resurrection, but at the end of his life it seemed as far distant as ever.

He haunted the Gaelic League offices, and the day he pushed the door open, entering the room with a great stride, I began to wonder who the intruder could be—this great tall man, dressed in a faded blue jacket and a pair of grey trousers, and a calico shirt. The Editor of the *Claidheam* introduced us, and my heart went out to him at once, as every heart did, for he was the recognizable Irishman, the adventurer, the wild goose. And after that meeting we met frequently between five and six o'clock; the Gaelic League offices were then a pleasant resort; all kinds and conditions of men assembled there, and we discussed the Irish language sitting upon tables while smoking cigarettes. It appeared every week in the *Claidheam Soluis*, and I liked to dictate a paragraph for somebody to turn into Irish before my eyes, and, when the editor paused for an equivalent, everyone ransacked his memory, but our dictionary was always O'Neill Russell—a rambling, incoherent, untrustworthy, old dictionary—but one that none of us would have willingly been without. It is pleasant to remember that he was in the offices of the League the day that I called to unfold my project for a little travelling company to the secretary and that he approved of it; but his conversation soon diverged from the matter in hand into an argument regarding the relative merits of Munster and Connaught Irish.

'I'm afraid,' he said, 'that you've come too late to revive the Irish language. There are only three

men in Ireland who can write pure Irish. It's dialect, sir, they write.'

'This may be true, my dear Mr. O'Neill Russell, but bad Irish is better than good English and I care little what Irish we get so long as we get ourselves out of English.'

A few days after, I returned triumphant to the secretary, Kuno Meyer having told me the night before that Goethe, when he was asked how the German language might be fostered in Poland, had answered, 'Not so much by schools, or by books, but by travelling companies that will play, not necessarily good plays—good plays are not even desirable—but homely little plays that will interest the villagers. Everybody likes the theatre, and people will take the trouble to learn a language so that they may understand plays.'

'I'm giving you Goethe's own words, and you'll be well advised to accept the wisdom of the wisest man since Antiquity.' The secretary did not answer, and I continued angrily: 'Up to the present you have done nothing but tell the people that they should learn Irish, and the people are asking themselves what good it will do them. You must make Irish worth their while. Now a unique opportunity for doing this is at hand. Willie Fay, an energetic and talented young actor, whose acquaintance I made during the rehearsals of *The Twisting of the Rope*, is willing to undertake the management of the little touring company. . . . What do you think?' The secretary did not answer. 'You don't agree with me that a company acting little plays in Irish would interest the people in the language, and encourage them to study it. You're not

of Goethe's opinion? You think that what may have been right in Germany may be wrong in Ireland?'

'That is not what I was going to say, sir. I was thinking of our finances, and whether it would be possible for the Gaelic League to spend any more money for the present. The organizers are costing the League a great deal of money.'

'But your organizers will not be able to do half as much for the language as a company of strolling players. How much do you pay your organizers?'

'About two hundred a year.'

'Two hundred a year to bawl from market-place to market-place: "Now, my fine fellows, will you be telling me why don't you speak the language of your forefathers? If it was good enough for them it ought to be good enough for you. And you, Joe Maguire, why aren't you talking Irish?"'

The secretary was not disposed to admit that the organizers of the League were as uncouth as I wished to represent them.

'It doesn't matter whether they be couth or uncouth, my good sir; you must provide a reason for the learning of Irish, and there are only two valid reasons—to read books and to understand plays.'

Bedell's Bible was mentioned; a masterpiece of modern Irish, the secretary admitted it to be.

'But what would Father Riley be saying if we were caught putting forward a Protestant book? We can't afford to have the priests against us.'

'I know that; but the priest couldn't object to the travelling company?'

'I don't see how he could,' and the secretary promised to lay my project for the financing of a

small company of strolling players before the Coisde Gnotha on the eighteenth. On the nineteenth he told me the matter had been carefully considered, but——

'If the Coisde Gnotha would only give me an opportunity of laying my project before them. You see it is impossible for you to tell them all that is in my mind.' The secretary said he thought he had listened very carefully to me, and had repeated all I had said. 'You will excuse me if I say that I could plead my own case better than you. Among other things I forgot to tell you that the travelling company might prove a paying concern. If it were to pay ten pounds a week after expenses?'

'Of course if it did that. . . . But besides the money there are other difficulties,' he said. 'There are women's parts in the plays you propose to have acted? The ladies who play these parts could hardly travel about unprotected. Father Riley, who is on the Coisde Gnotha——'

'He is everywhere.'

'He's a great man for the Irish, and he brought out this point very clearly, and everybody agreed with him.'

'Of course, if Ireland is to be governed by parish priests!' and I fumed about the office, talking of the Italian Renaissance.

'There is nothing to hinder you and Mr. Martyn from starting a company.'

'Fiddlesticks. The Moore and Martyn Company would have no success whatever. If it is to be done at all it will have to be called The Gaelic League Touring Company. Besides, Mr. Martyn wouldn't

go into any project that the priests opposed on the ground of faith and morals; so I suppose the thing is at an end.'

'I wouldn't advise you to go on with it, for I've always noticed that nothing succeeds in Ireland unless the priests take it up.'

'So the Irish language is going to be sacrificed for the sake of a little female virtue. But girls are seducing young men . . . and old men, too, for matter of that, all over the world, and every hour of the night and day. That such a profligacy is not desirable in England I readily understand; but in Ireland! You know what I mean.'

'I'm afraid I don't.'

'You surprise me.' And taking a sovereign out of my pocket, I held it up to his gaze. 'The depreciation of the gold species. Now you understand?'

'I'm afraid I don't.'

'If a man employs fifty girls in a factory he wishes them to practise virtue, for if they don't they will not be able to give him that amount of work which will enable him to pay dividends. But in Ireland there are no factories, and consequently female virtue is not a natural necessity, as in England.'

'I'm afraid you'll never get Father Riley to see it from your point of view.'

'Probably not. Irish Catholics have taken their morality from English Puritans. I should have said economists. Good-morning.'

But half-way down the stairs a new idea occurred to me, and the temptation was very great to return and tell the secretary that the safety bicycle has brought a new morality into the world, even into

Ireland, for, by freeing girls from the control of their mothers, it has given them the right to earn their own living; and the right of women to earn their living on their feet has—and I paused to consider the question—has brought to a close the oldest of all the trades. The light-of-love is becoming as rare as the chough, and on the dusty stairs of the Gaelic League I remembered how numerous they used to be on Kingstown Pier on Sundays, all of them beautifully dressed in sea-green dresses and seal-skin jackets. 'All the same, there is no reason why the moralist should rejoice; their places are being taken by bands of enthusiastic amateurs. Thousands of years ago in India,' I said, 'the Buddhist spoke of the wheel of Life, or was it the wheel of Change?' And, thinking how quickly this wheel revolves in our midst, I imagined myself in a pulpit, preaching a great sermon on morality, its cause and cure; and the wonderful things I could say on this subject ran on in my head until I caught sight of three large, healthy-looking priests standing on the kerb, dressed in admirable broadcloth, and wearing finely-stitched American boots, their fat and freckled hands playing with their watch-chains. At that moment dear Edward joined them, and from the complacency that his arrival brought into the clerical faces it seemed certain that he was asking how the country was looking, meaning thereby, how is the Irish language going along? 'And they are answering his questions sympathetically,' I said; but on approaching the group the words 'Her Excellency' caught my ear, and I guessed that they were talking of the caravan which Lady Aberdeen

had sent round the country—a caravan of plastic protests and warnings against the danger of spitting, and of sleeping within closed windows.

'But it will not occur to them that insufficient food is the cause of much consumption,' I said, thinking of the vanman who goes out at six o'clock in the morning and returns home at midday wet to the skin, and, after a dinner of potatoes and dripping (lucky if he gets a bit of American bacon), goes out again, and comes back about eight or nine to a cup of tea, lucky if he gets that before lying down in his wet shirt.' Father Riley had set me against the clerics, and it was in a spirit of rebuke that I listened to the priests proposing that sermons denouncing spitting should be delivered in every parish from the altar.

Edward introduced me to the holy ones, and, after listening to them for a while, the temptation stole over me to tell them that I had written to Her Excellency last night, asking her to use her very great influence to make known the cure that had been discovered.

'And what cure is that?' Edward asked innocently.

'Holy Orders. Now, listen! I've inquired the matter out and have succeeded in discovering the fact that for the last hundred years no Archbishop has died from consumption, nor a Bishop, nor a parish priest, only two or three out-lying curates. Therefore, my letter to Her Excellency is a serious advocacy that all Ireland should take Orders, those who want to lead celibate lives remaining or becoming Catholics, those who wish to enter the marriage state remaining, or discovering themselves, Protestants. In this way, and only in this way, will Her Excellency be able

to kill a fatal disease and rid Ireland of religious differences. What do you think of the new cure, gentlemen? But, Edward, wait a moment.' As the priests did not seem ready with an answer, I bade them good-bye abruptly, and hurried after Edward. 'Why all this haste?' I asked, overtaking him.

'I don't like that kind of talk. It's most offensive to me; and I, after introducing you——'

'But, my dear Edward, how can it be offensive to propose that all Ireland shall take Orders? Didn't Father Sheehan say in his last masterpiece that he looked forward to the day when Ireland should be one vast monastery?'

'When that day comes they'll make short work of fellows like you—ship you all off. But I daren't linger at the corner talking; I'll catch another cold.'

'But, Edward, I've just come from the Gaelic League, and have to speak to you on a matter of importance.'

'Well, then, come along.'

'We might follow the quays to Ringsend.'

'That way means loitering, looking at ships,' and Edward, who had been feeling a little bit livery lately, proposed that we should walk to Ballsbridge and follow the Dodder on to Donnybrook, returning home by Leeson Street. We crossed Carlisle Bridge at the rate of four miles an hour, and at the end of Westmoreland Street Edward said 'This way,' and we turned into Brunswick Street. At Westland Row he said, 'We'll turn up here and avoid the back streets,' and away we went, through Merrion Square and Lower Mount Street, Edward thinking all the time of his liver, never for a moment of the business

that I wished to speak to him about, and my irritation increased against him at every lamp-post in Lower Mount Street, but I restrained myself till we reached Ballsbridge.

'Was a man ever absorbed in himself as you are, I wonder?'

'How is that?' he asked, becoming interested at once.

'You've forgotten that I told you I had an important matter to speak to you about.'

'No, I haven't. But I'm waiting for you to speak about it.'

'And all this while——'

'Come now, no fussing. What have you got to say?'

Feeling the uselessness of being angry with him, I told him of my interview with the secretary. 'Apparently the touring company is all off; and, though you were in favour of it a fortnight ago, you weren't enthusiastic when it came up for discussion. You were asleep.'

'Who told you I was asleep? You'd fall asleep, too, if you were kept out of your bed till three o'clock in the morning, listening to them saying the same things over and over again.'

'Well, when you woke up you voted against me with Father Riley. Deny it if you can.'

'It wasn't till Father Riley brought out the point——'

'But you were asleep.'

'No, I wasn't asleep. I followed the argument very closely, and I agree with Father Riley that it would be a very serious thing, indeed, to induce four or five girls to leave their mothers, and cast them

into the promiscuous current of theatrical life without proper chaperons.'

'A breath of theology blows you hither and thither. You'd have yielded to the persuasion of the learned friar to throw out *The Countess Cathleen*, if you hadn't found a backing in Father Barry and Father Tom Finlay. Your own play would have had to go with it; even that sacrifice would not have stopped you; and because we wouldn't produce your play, *The Tale of a Town*——'

'I don't know that anybody else would have acted as I did. When you sided with Yeats against me, I gave you my play to adapt, to cut up, to turn inside out, for I had always preached unity, and was determined that nobody should say I didn't practise what I preached when my turn came.'

'We produced *Maeve* instead of *The Tale of a Town*. You didn't expect that we were going to produce two plays by you in one year, did you? We preferred *Maeve*. All the same you threw us over. Your agreement with Yeats was to provide money for three years, and when you backed out we had to go to Benson. He agreed to produce *Diarmuid and Grania*, else the Irish Literary Theatre would not have completed its three years.'

'There was a great deal in *Diarmuid and Grania* which I didn't approve of—many coarse expressions, and a tendency to place pagan Ireland above Christian Ireland. I'm not taken in—I'm not taken in by you and Yeats and . . . the old proselytizer in the background.'

The long loose mouth tightened; a look of resolution came into the eyes; the woollen gloves grasped

the umbrella, and the step grew quicker. I lagged a little behind to obtain a better view of the great boots. Years ago, in London, I had asked him to come and see the Robinsons with me, not noticing the size of his boots until he was seated in their drawing-room; on the hearthrug at Earl's Terrace they seemed to take up so much room that I felt obliged to tell Edward that he would do well to get himself a pair of patent leathers, which, I am bound to say, he ordered at once, and in Jermyn Street, presenting on his next visit a more spruce appearance. But he had always felt out of his element in drawing-rooms, and had long ago returned to the original boots and to the black overcoat, in which he wraps himself in winter as in a blanket. Under the brim of the bowler hat I could just catch sight of the line of his aquiline nose—a drop hung at the end of it; it fell as we entered Leeson Street, at the moment when he was telling me of the agreement he would draw up if he succeeded in persuading the Archbishop to accept his ten thousand pounds for the support of the polyphonic choir. Edward is shrewd enough in business, and I admired the scrupulosity of the wording of the bond which would prevent the clerics from ever returning to Gounod's *Ave Maria.*

'My money will be tied up in such a way that there will be no setting aside of Palestrina for Verdi's *Requiem* when I'm out of the way.'

It amused me to think of the embarrassment of the Archbishop fairly caught between the devil and the deep sea, reduced to the necessity of refusing ten thousand pounds, or entering into the strictest covenant for the performance of sixteenth-century polyphonic

music for ever and ever. On one point, however, Edward was inclined to yield. If some great composer of religious music should arise, the fact that he was born out of due time, should not exclude his works from performance at the Dublin Cathedral.

'But as that possibility is very remote, it is not probable that my choir will ever stray beyond Palestrina, Vittoria, Orlando di Lasso, and Clemens non Papa.'

His appearance seemed so strangely at variance with his tastes that I could not help smiling; the old grey trousers challenged the eye at that moment, and I thought of the thin decadent youth, very fastidious in his dress, writing Latin, Greek, or French poems, that one would have naturally imagined as the revivalist of old polyphonic music. An old castle would be the inevitable dwelling of this youth; he would have purchased one for the purpose. But Edward had inherited the castle. He is, as his mother used to say, the last male of his race. A very old race the Martyns are, having been in Ireland since the earliest times. It is said that they came over with William the Conqueror from France, so Edward is a descendant of ancient knights on one side, the very lineage that the Parsifal side of Edward's nature would choose, but the Parsifal side is remote and intermittent, it does not form part of his actual life. There is no faintest trace of snobbery in Edward, and he is prouder of the Smiths than the Martyns, attributing any talent that he may have to his grandfather, John Smith of Masonbrook, a pure peasant, a man of great original genius, who, without education or assistance from anyone, succeeded in piling up a great

fortune in the county of Galway. When estates were being sold in the Encumbered Estates Court, he had invested his money in land, and so successful were his speculations that he was able to marry his daughter to old John Martyn of Tillyra, to whom she brought a fortune of ten thousand pounds. She had inherited from her father some good looks, a distinguished appearance, many refined tastes, and the reader of *Ave* has not forgotten altogether her grief at Edward's celibacy, which would deprive the Gothic house he built to please her of an heir.

My recollections of the twain go back to the very beginning of my life, to the time when Edward returned from Oxford, writing poems that I admired for their merit, and probably a little for the sake of my friend, in whom I discerned an original nature. 'I am too different from other people,' he used to say, 'ever to be a success.'

The poems were ultimately burnt, because they seemed to him to be, on reflection, in disagreement with the teachings of his Church. 'So he was in the beginning what he is in the end,' I said, 'and a great psychologist might have predicted his solitary life in two musty rooms above a tobacconist's shop, and his last habits, such as pouring his tea into a saucer, balancing the saucer on three fingers like an old woman in the country. Edward is all right if he gets his Mass in the morning and his pipe in the evening. A great bulk of peasantry with a delicious strain of Palestrina running through it.'

'I must be getting my dinner,' he said.

'But won't you come home and dine with me? There are many other points——'

'No,' he said, 'I don't care to dine with you. You're never agreeable at table. You find fault with the cooking.'

'If you come back I swear to you that whatever the cook may send me up——'

'The last time I dined at your house you made remarks about my appetite.'

'If I did, it was because I feared appoplexy. Several parish priests have died lately.'

His great back disappeared in the direction of a tavern.

VIII

As it seemed easier to tell Willie Fay the bad news than to write a letter I left a message with one of his friends asking him to call at my house. Any evening except Saturday would suit me. On Saturday evenings I received my friends, and it would be difficult to discuss the matter freely before them. It was one Thursday night that he came and perched himself on the highest chair in the room in spite of my protests. He fidgeted in it like a man in a hurry, anxious to get through an interview which had no longer any interest for him, answering me with a 'yes' and a 'no,' receiving the suggestion very coldly that in a few months new members would be elected to the Coisde Gnotha.

'Men,' I said, 'who will take a different view from Father Riley. I suppose you wouldn't care to wait?'

'They'll go their way and I'll go mine,' he answered, and with such a grand air of indifference that I began to suspect he had already heard of my

failure to persuade the Gaelic League to accept him as the manager of a touring company and had gotten something else in view. The acoustics of Dublin are very perfect. But when I questioned him regarding his plans he gave a vague answer and took his leave as soon as he decently could.

A secret there certainly was, and I thought it over till Æ mentioned on Saturday night that the Fays' had come to ask him to allow them to perform his *Deirdre*.

'Your *Deirdre!*'

And forthwith he confided to me that one morning, about six weeks before, as he rose from his bed, he had seen her in the woods, 'where she lived,' he added (I was not then instructed in the legends) 'with Levarcam, a Druidess, that King Concubar had set to guard her maidenhood. I saw the lilacs blooming in the corner of the yard, and herself running through the woods towards the dun. She came crying to her dear foster-mother, half for protection, half for glee—she had seen a young man for the first time, Naisi, who, in pursuit of a deer, had passed through the glen unperceived, though it was strictly guarded by the king's spearmen.'

'And what happens then?' I asked, interested in the setting forth of the story.

'A love-scene with Naisi, who begs Deirdre to fly with him to Scotland, for only by putting a sea between them can they escape the wrath of Concubar.'

'He arrives too late. Scene with Levarcam,' I said, and regretted the words for they seemed to jar Æ's gentle, but compelling, conception of the story. 'Now for your second act.'

Up to the present he had received no faintest idea of it, but the first act had been transmitted so clearly that even Plunkett's work had to be deferred till he had written it. He had finished it at a single sitting and the Fays' were busy rehearsing it every evening.'

'So I suppose I shall have to go on with it.'

My excited curiosity compelled me to ask him how they had heard of this sudden inspiration.

'Standish O'Grady wrote to me for an article to fill up a number of the *All Ireland Review*, but I had no article by me, nor any time to write one, having spent all my spare time on the act, which I sent along, saying that he was welcome to print it if he liked.'

'O'Grady must have pulled a wry face when he received it,' I thought. 'He has retold the legends himself and can have little taste for dramatic versions of them; but an editor short of copy cannot be too particular'—a parenthetical reflection of my own of no particular moment. Æ's act went away to the printers, and the Fays' arrived a little late at their offices next morning, the reading of the act having delayed them in the street. They were up at Æ's that evening, begging him to let them produce the play, and assuring him they would be glad to have the second and third acts at his early convenience.

It was while returning home over Portobello Bridge that he saw Naisi in his Scottish dun mending a spear, 'a memory of the chivalry of the Ultonians having kindled in him during the night.' But the gift of prophecy is upon Deirdre, who begins to bewail her lover's return to Ireland and to foretell

great misfortunes. Through the boom of the sea a horn is heard. 'The horn of Fergus! I know it,' Naisi cries.

'So far have I written,' Æ said, 'and as soon as I get another free evening I shall finish the act for them.'

But he had to wait a few weeks for his next inspiration, when he finished the act which he repeated to us one Saturday night, for Æ holds all that he writes in his heart, comma for comma. It was a long time, however, before a third free evening could be found, and in great patience the actors and actresses continued to chant their parts through the winter nights until the third act was brought to them.

It was then discovered that Æ's play was too short for an evening's entertainment, and Yeats was asked for his *Cathleen ni Houlihan;* he had met her last summer in one of the Seven Woods of Coole—in which a future historian will decide; for me it is to tell merely that the two plays were performed on April 15 in St. Teresa's Hall, Clarendon Street, before an enthusiastic and demonstrative crowd of men and women. A later historian will also have to determine whether Æ took the part of the God Manaanan MacLir at this performance, or whether he only appeared in the part at the preliminary performance in Coffey's drawing-room. All I know for certain is that none will ever forget the terrible emphasis he gave to the syllables Man-aan-nawn Mac-Leer in Coffey's drawing-room. He very likely had something to do with the bringing over of Maud Gonne from France to play the part of Cathleen ni

Houlihan. Or did she come for Yeats' sake? However, she came, and dreaming of the many rebel societies that awaited her coming she gave point to the line since become famous:

'They have taken from me my four beautiful fields,'

a line which I have no hesitation in taking from Lady Gregory and attributing to Yeats.

An Irish audience always likes to be reminded of the time when Ireland was a nation, and the Fays' determined that some organization must be started to keep the idea alive; the Presidency of the National Theatre Society was offered to Æ, but he seemed to have considered his dramatic mission over, and contented himself with drawing up the rules and advising the members to elect Yeats as their President. He may have noticed that Yeats had been seeking an outlet for Irish dramatic genius ever since the break-up of the Irish Literary Theatre, and for sure the fact was not lost upon him that Yeats' ears pricked up only when the word 'play' was mentioned, and that his eyes were never lifted from the ground in his walks except to overlook a piece of waste ground as a possible site for a theatre. He could not but have heard Yeats mutter on more than one occasion, 'Goethe had a theatre . . . Wagner had a theatre'; and he had drawn the just conclusion that Yeats was seeking an outlet for Irish dramatic talent, and would bring courage and energy to the aid of the new movement. Oh, the wise Æ, for as soon as Yeats was elected President he took the Fays' in hand, discovering almost immediately that their art was of French descent and could be traced back to

the middle of the seventeenth century in France. Some explanation of this kind was necessary, for Dublin had to be persuaded that two little clerks had suddenly become great artists, and to confirm Dublin in this belief the newspapers were requested to state that Mr. W. B. Yeats was writing a play for Mr. William Fay on the subject of *The Pot of Broth.*

Well, the best of us are sometimes short-sighted and superficial, and let it be freely confessed, that it seemed to me at the time disgraceful that the author of *The Wanderings of Usheen* should stoop to writing a farce, for the subject Yeats had chosen was farcical, and the word represented to me only the merely conventional drolleries that I had seen on the London stage. My excuse for my blindness is that I have spent much of my life in France among French writers; folk lore was unknown in Montmartre in my time, and no French writer that I know of, except Molière and George Sand, has made use of *patois* in literature; we are only beginning to become alive to the beauty of living speech when living speech is fast being driven out by journalists. But to return to Yeats, whose claim to immortality is well founded, for he knew from the first that literature rises in the mountains like a spring and descends, enlarging into a rivulet and then into a river. All this is clear to me to-day, but when he spoke to me of *The Pot of Broth,* I asked him if he weren't ashamed of himself; and when he proposed that I should choose a similar subject and write a farce for Willie Fay, I rose from my chair, relying on gesture to express my abhorrence of his scheme. But not

liking to be left out of anything, I consented, at last, to write half a dozen plays to be translated into Irish.

'It may not be necessary to have them translated. Wouldn't it do you as well if Lady Gregory put idiom on them?

'We shall get the idiom much better,' I answered, 'by having the plays translated into Irish. I will publish the Irish text, and you can do what you like with the brogue.'

The stupid answer of a man intellectually run down; but next day I was down at the Gaelic League unfolding my project to the secretary, who thought it a very good one for the advancement of the Irish language. As soon as the plays were written he would hand them in, and the Coisde Gnotha could decide.

'My good man, do you think that I came over from England to submit plays to the Coisde Gnotha?'

And we two stood looking at each other until the futility of my question began to dawn upon me; and then, to pass the matter over, I asked him if he knew of any Irish writers who could clothe the skeletons which I would supply with suitable dialogue. He said that Taidgh O'Donoghue was very busy at present, but a Feis was being held in Galway, and suggested that I should go down and seek what I wanted among the prize-winners.

'Mr. Edward Martyn is one of the judges of traditional singing; you'll see him.'

'And Yeats and Lady Gregory are certain to be there.' And away I went gleefully to interview the Irish language *chez elle* in the historic town of Galway. Of the journey there my mind retains no memory,

which is a pity, for I must have met in the train interesting people whose conversation is lost to these pages. My memory does not begin again till I entered the long low room in which the Feis was being held. A pleasing impression it was: the May sunlight flowing gently through its square windows, lighting up in patches the people sitting on the benches; the peasant standing on the stage singing; and Edward with his hand to his ear.

'How are you, Edward?'

'A great singer come from Connemara. I've often told you of traditional singing. Will you listen to it?'

The old melomaniac's face was a study; but, however closely I lent my ear to the singer, I could not distinguish any music, only a vague melancholy drift of sound, rising and falling, unmeasured as the wind soughing among the trees or the lament of the waves on the shore, something that might go on all day long, and the old fellow thatching his cabin all the while. The singer was followed by a piper, and the music that Michael Fluddery, a blind man from Connemara, drew from his pipes was hardly more articulate. At first it seemed to me that I could follow the tune, but very soon all sequence died out of it, and it became a mere tangle of natural sounds which quickly transported me to the edge of a marsh that I had known in childhood. I could see the black water of the lough and a bittern drinking from a bog drain. The bird went away on slow wings into a darkling sky; and then it seemed to me that I could hear the sound of widgeons passing overhead. The series of little cries that followed reminded me of snipe rising out of the reeds in front of the lough.

My thoughts melted into a long meditation, until a long wail from the pipes startled me, and then I looked up as if I had heard a swan that had been flying all day drop with a cry into the dark waters of Lough Navadogue. But I was awake again in the long low room with May sunlight streaming through the square windows, Edward's hand was at his ear, just as if he was afraid of missing a note; and at a little distance away Yeats and Lady Gregory sat colloguing together, their faces telling me nothing. And when the pipes burst forth again it was into a noisy jig. But to my ears it was not much more than mere clatter, a high note, and a low one dropped in here and there. Dancers rushed in, hopped up and down, round about and back again, the women's petticoats whirling above grey worsted legs, the tails of the men's frieze coats flying behind them, their hobnails hammering a great dust out of the floor. There were no pauses. As soon as the jig was over the story-teller came in, and, taking a chair, he warmed his hands over an imaginary peat fire, and began his traditional narrative, which did not differ very much from traditional singing. Now and then he seemed to wander, and I thought he must be telling of somebody lost in a field, who had to turn his coat inside out to rid himself of the fairy spell; and, glancing round the audience, I could see the eyes of the Irish speakers kindling (it was easy to pick them out), the wandering Celtic eye, pale as their own hills. How they listened! interested in the narrative, recognizing themselves and their forlorn lives in it. Creatures of marsh and

jungle they seemed to me, sad as the primitive Nature in which they lived. I had known them from childhood but was always afraid of them, and used to run into the woods when I saw the women coming with the men's dinners from Derrinanny (the name is like them), and the marsh behind the village and the dim line of the Partry Mountains were always alien to me.

'Edward, let's get away. We're losing all the sunlight.'

He could not leave the Feis just then, but if I would wait till the story-teller had finished he might be able to get away for an hour.

'We're expecting a piper from Aran, the great piper of the middle island——'

'And a great number of story-tellers,' Yeats added.

'You see, I'm the President of the Pipers' Club,' Edward broke in.

'They should be here by now, only there is no wind in the bay,' Yeats muttered.

I begged of him to come away, but he did not know if he could leave Lady Gregory. He leaned over her, and at the end of some affable murmuring she seemed satisfied to let him go, accepting his promise to come back to fetch her in time for lunch; and we three went out together for a walk through the town.

'How happy the sunlight makes me! Don't you feel a little tipsy, Edward? How could you have wanted to sit listening any longer to that eternal rigmarole without beginning or end?'

'You mean the traditional singer? He wasn't very good, and only got poor marks,' Edward said, and he asked me what I thought of the piper.

'He recalled many memories and a landscape. But if you like folk music how is it that you don't like folk-tales?'

'I do like folk-tales in the Irish language or in the English——'

'Folk is our refuge from vulgarity,' Yeats answered, and we strolled aimlessly through the sunlight.

'Where would you like to go?' Edward asked me abruptly.

'To see the salmon. All my life I've heard of the salmon lying in the river, four and five deep, like sardines in a box.'

'Well, you'll see them to-day,' Yeats answered.

There were other idlers besides ourselves enjoying the fair weather, and their arms resting on the stone bridge they looked into the brown rippling water, remarking from time to time that the river was very low (no one had ever seen it lower), and that the fish would have to wait a long time before there was sufficient water for them to get up the weir. But my eyes could not distinguish a fish till Yeats told me to look straight down through the brown water, and I saw one, and immediately afterwards a second and a third and a fourth. And then the great shoal, hundreds, thousands of salmon, each fish keeping its place in the current, a slight movement of the tail being sufficient.

'But if they should get tired of waiting and return to the sea?'

Yeats is a bit of a naturalist, and in an indolent mood it was pleasant to listen to him telling of the habits of the salmon which only feeds in the sea. If the fishermen were to get a rise it would be because

the fish were tired of waiting and snapped at anything to relieve the tedium of existence.

A lovely day it was, the town lying under a white canopy of cloud, not a wind in all the air, but a line of houses sheer and dim along the river mingling with grey shadows; and on the other bank there were waste places difficult to account for, ruins showing dimly through the soft diffused light, like old castles, but Yeats said they were the ruins of ancient mills, for Galway had once been a prosperous town.

'Maybe,' my spirit answered, 'but less beautiful than she is to-day.' More distinct is my memory of the rock on which the fisherman sat throwing his fly in vain, for the fish were too absorbed in their natural instinct to think of anything but the coming flood which would carry them up the river. He changed his fly many times, and at last, with some strange medley of red and blue and purple, he roused a fish out of its lethargy. It snapped; the hook caught in its gills, and a battle began which lasted up and down the stream, till at last a wearied fish was drawn up to the bank for the gillie to gaff. We saw it laid upon a rock, its head was broken with a mallet, and the fisherman prepared to throw his fly again across the river. Another silly fish would be tempted to snap at the gaudy thing dragged across its very nose sooner or later. . . . But we had seen enough of fishing for one day, and, proposing to show us old Galway, Edward led us through a dusty, dilapidated square; and by the broken railings of the garden we stopped, for in the middle of the grass-plot somebody had set up an ancient gateway, all that remained of some great house; and when we had admired it we

followed him through some crumbling streets to the town house of the Martyns, for in the eighteenth century the western gentry did not go to Dublin for the season. Dublin was two long days' journey away; going to Dublin meant spending a night on the road, and so every important county family had its town house in Galway. My grandfathers must have danced in Galway, there being no important town in Mayo, and in fine houses, if one may judge from what remains of Edward's. Edward regretted that his house had been let out in tenements. It was nearly a ruin, he said, when it came into his hands; the roof was falling, and the police had ordered him to have it taken down, as it was a public danger. We listened to him, pondering the while, the archway under which the four-horsed coach used to pass into the courtyard; Edward pointed out some marble chimney-pieces high up on the naked walls, saying he had better have them taken away, but I hoped he would leave them, for a scattered vision of ladies in high-peaked bodices and gentlemen with swords had just appeared to me, dancing in mid-air.

'Leave them, and these steps where the lackeys have set down sedan chairs; embroidered shoes have run up these steps, flowered trains following, to dance minuet or gavotte . . . or waltzes.'

And arguing whether the waltz had penetrated to Galway in the eighteenth century, we followed Edward to the cathedral. He liked being there, though its worship was Protestant, and he made himself very agreeable, telling us that it was built late in the fifteenth century, and we wandered down the aisles, deploring the vulgarity of the modern world.

'It would be impossible to build as beautiful a cathedral to-day, for it is in keeping with the town, yet there could not have been much culture in Galway in the fifteenth century.'

'Galway was then without knowledge,' Yeats muttered.

'Quite so,' I answered. 'We corrupt in knowledge and purify ourselves in ignorance.'

'Who said that?' Yeats asked sharply.

'Balzac, but I cannot answer for the exact words.'

'How true! How true!' Edward repeated, and, leading us down a lane-way, he pointed out some stone-carvings which seemed to him conclusive of the fifteenth, but which might be sixteenth century sculpture, Ireland being always a century behind England, and England being always a century behind France. All the same he believed that the gateway was late fifteenth century, for at that time Galway was trading with Spain and the gateway bore traces of Spanish influence. He spoke of the great galleons from Spain that once came floating up the bay, their sails filled with the sunset, and called our attention to the wide sweeping outlines of the headlands stretching far away into the Atlantic. 'Not only in certain buildings but in flesh and blood are traces of the Spaniard to be found in Galway,' I said, and pointed to a group of yellow-skinned boys basking among the brown nets drying along the great wharf. Edward told me that these were Claddagh boys, and that the Claddagh are all Irish speakers; and we stopped to question them as to what language they were in the habit of using, only to learn with sorrow that English and Irish were all the same to them.

'That is how a language dies,' Edward said. 'The parents speak it, the children understand it, but don't speak it, and the grandchildren neither speak nor understand. I like the English language and I like the Irish, but I hate the mixture.'

Yeats sighed, and the boys told us that the hooker from Aran was lying out there in the west, becalmed, and we need not expect her before evening, unless the men put out the oars, and she was too heavy for rowing.

'On a warm day like this, not likely,' I answered and the indolent boys laughed, and we continued our walk down the wharf, thinking of the great labour spent upon it. The bringing of all these stones and the building of them so firmly and for such a long way into the sea could only have been done in famine times. A long wharf, so long that we had not walked half its length when Yeats and Edward began to speak of returning to the Feis; and, leaving them undecided, staring into the mist, hoping to catch sight every moment of the black hull of the hooker, I strayed on ahead, looking round, wondering, tempted to explore the mystery of the wharf's end. Yet what mystery could there be? Only a lot of tumbled stones. But the wonder of the world has hardly decreased for me since the days when I longed to explore the wilderness of rocks at the end of Kingstown Pier, the great clefts frightening me, sending me back, ashamed of my cowardice, to where my uncles and aunts and cousins were seated, listening to the band (in the sixties fashionable Dublin used to assemble on the pier on Sunday afternoons). One day I was bolder, and descended

into the wilderness, returning after a long absence, very excited, and telling that I had met the King of the Fairies fishing at the mouth of the cave. The story that I had brought back was that he had caught three fish when I had met him and had given me one. I was silent when asked why I had forgotten to bring it back with me, my interest in the adventure being centred in the fact that in answer to my question how far Fairyland was from Kingstown, he had told me that a great wave rises out of the sea every month, and that I must go away upon it, and then wait for another great wave, which would take me another piece of the way. I must wait for a third wave, and it would be the ninth that would throw me right up on to Fairyland.

But the story interested nobody but me; my uncles and aunts looked at me, evidently considering if I weren't a little daft; and one of the crudest of the Blakes, a girl with a wide, ugly mouth and a loud voice, laughed harshly, saying that I could not be taken anywhere, even to Kingstown Pier, without something wonderful happening to me. These Blakes were my first critics, and their gibes filled me with shame, and I remember coming to a resolve that night to avoid all the places where one would be likely to meet a fairy fisherman, and if I did come across another by ill-chance, to run away from him, my fingers in my ears. But notwithstanding that early vow and many subsequent vows, I have failed to see and hear as the Blakes do, and I go on meeting adventures everywhere, even on the wharf at Galway, which should have been safe from them. By Edward one is always safe from adventures, and

it would have been well for me not to have stirred from his side. I only strayed fifty yards, but that short distance was enough, for while looking down into the summer sea, thinking how it moved up against the land's side like a soft, feline animal, the voices of some women engaged my attention and turning I saw that three girls had come down to a pool sequestered out of observation, in a hollow of the headland. Sitting on the bank, they drew off their shoes and stockings and advanced into the water, kilting their petticoats above their knees as it deepened. On seeing me they laughed invitingly; and, as if desiring my appreciation one girl walked across the pool, lifting her red petticoat to her waist, and forgetting to drop it when the water shallowed, she showed me thighs whiter and rounder than any I have ever seen, their country coarseness heightening the temptation. And she continued to come towards me. A few steps would have taken me behind a hillock. They might have bathed naked before me, and it would have been the boldest I should have chosen, if fortune had favoured me. But Yeats and Edward began calling, and, dropping her petticoats, she waded away from me.

'What are you doing down there, George? Hurry up! Here's the hooker being rowed into the bay bringing the piper and the story-tellers from Aran.'

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

IX

'Edward,' I said, 'if the Irish language is to be revived something in the way of reading must be provided for the people.'

'Haven't they Hyde's *Folk Tales*?'

'Yes, and these are well enough in their way, but a work is what is needed—a book.'

Edward thought that as soon as the Irish people had learnt their language somebody would be sure to write a national work.

'There's plenty of talent about.'

'But, my dear friend, there isn't sufficient application.'

'You're quite right.' And we talked of atmosphere and literary tradition, neither of which we had nor could have for a hundred years. 'And therefore are without hope of an original work in the Irish language. But we can get a translation of a masterpiece. We want a book and can't go on any farther without one. I hear everybody complaining that when he has learnt Irish there is nothing for him to read.'

'But do you think they would deign to read a translation?' Edward answered, laughing, and he agreed with me that, outside of folklore, there is no art except that which comes of great culture.

'A translation of a world-wide masterpiece is what we want, and we have to decide on a work before we reach Athlone.'

'Why Athlone?'

'Athlone or Mullingar. Now, Edward, you are to give your whole mind to the question.'

'Nothing English,' he said resolutely. 'Something Continental—some great Continental work.' His eyes became fixed, and I saw that he was thinking. '*Télémaque*,' he said at last.

'"*Télémaque*" would be quite safe, but aren't you afraid that it is a little tedious?'

'*Gil Blas*?'

'I never read *Gil Blas*, but have heard many people say that they couldn't get through it. What do you think of *Don Quixote*? It comes from a great Catholic country, and it was written by a Catholic;' and until we remembered the story of *The Curious Impertinent*, and the other stories interwoven into the narrative, *Don Quixote*, seemed to be the very thing we needed. 'We want short stories,' I said. 'A selection of tales from Maupassant.'

'The Gaelic League might object.'

'It certainly would if my name were mentioned. I've got it, Edward!—*The Arabian Nights*. There are no stories the people would read so readily.'

Edward was inclined to agree with me, and before we reached Dublin it was arranged that he should give fifty pounds and I five-and-twenty towards the publication of Taidgh O'Donoghue's translation.

'And if more is wanted,' Edward said, 'they can have it. But remember one thing. It must be sanctioned by the Gaelic League and published under its auspices; as you well know, my interests are in public life. I have no private life.'

'Oh yes, you have, Edward; I'm your private life.'

Edward snorted and took refuge in his joke '*Mon ami Moore*'; but this time he showed himself trust-

worthy. He wrote to the *Freeman's Journal,* disclosing our project, and winding up his letter with an expression of belief that the entire cost of the work could not be much more than one hundred and fifty, and that he was quite sure there were many who would like to help.

Many were willing to help us—with advice. The *Freeman's Journal* came out next day full up of letters signed by various Dublin litterati, approving of the project, but suggesting a different book for translation. One writer thought that Plutarch's *Lives* would supply the people with a certain culture, which he ventured to say was needed in the country. Another was disposed to look favourably upon a translation of *St. Thomas Aquinas;* another proposed *Cæsar's Commentaries;* and the debate was continued until the truth leaked out that the proposed translation of *The Arabian Nights* was due to my suggestion. Then, of course, all the fat was in the fire. 'Sacerdotus' contributed a column and a half which may be reduced to this sentence: 'Mr. George Moore has selected *The Arabian Nights* because he wishes an indecent book to be put into the hands of every Irish peasant. We do not take our ideas of love from Mohammedan countries; we are a pure race.'

The paper slipped from my hand and I lay back in my chair overwhelmed, presenting a very mournful spectacle to anyone coming into the room. How long I lay inert I don't know, but I remember starting out of my chair, crying, 'I must go and see Edward!'

'Well, George, you see you've got the reputation

for a certain kind of writing, and you can't blame the priests if——'

'Edward, Edward!'

'After all it is their business to watch over their flocks, and to see that none is corrupted.'

'Ba, ba, ba! ba, ba, ba!'

'"*Mon ami Moore, Mon ami Moore!*"'

'You'll drive me mad, Edward, if you continue that idiotic joke any longer. The matter is a serious one. I came over to Ireland——'

'You have no patience.'

'No patience!' I cried, looking at the great man. 'He is the Irish Catholic people,' I said, and later in the afternoon, my disappointment caused me to doze away in front of my beautiful, grey Manet, my exquisite mauve Monet, and my sad Pissaro. 'The Irish are a cantankerous, hateful race,' I muttered, on awaking. And the mood of hate endured for some days, myself continually asking myself why I had ventured back into Ireland. But at the end of the week a new plan for the regeneration of the Irish race came into my head. It seemed an excellent thing for me to write a volume of short stories dealing with peasant life, and these would be saved from the criticism of Sacerdotus and his clan if they were first published in a clerical review. 'One can only get the better of the clergy by setting the clergy against the clergy. In that way Louis XV. ridded France of the Jesuits, and obtained possession of all their property; and in Ireland, no more than in France, are the Jesuits on the best of terms with the secular clergy . . . they might be inclined to take me up.'

My hopes in this direction were not altogether unwarranted. I had read a paper when I came over to Ireland for the performance of *The Bending of the Bough*, on the necessity of the revival of the Irish language, for literary as well as for national reasons, at a public luncheon given by the Irish Literary Society, and a few days after the reading of this paper, a neighbour of mine in Mayo wrote to me, saying that a friend of hers desired to make my acquaintance. It was natural to suppose that it could not be anyone but some tiresome woman, and up went my nose. 'No, it isn't a woman; it is a priest.' My nose went up still higher. 'Father Finlay,' she said, and I was at once overjoyed, for I had long desired to make Father Tom's acquaintance. But it was not to Father Tom, but to his brother Peter that she proposed to introduce me. 'A much superior person,' she said, 'a man of great learning, who has lived in Rome many years and speaks Latin.'

'As well as he should be able to speak Irish,' I clamoured.

'You will like him much better than the agriculturist,' she answered earnestly.

It did not seem at all sure to me that she was right; but, not wishing to lose a chance of winning friends for the Irish language, I accompanied her somewhat reluctantly to the Jesuit College in Milltown.

A curious and absurd little meeting it was; myself producing all my arguments, trying to convince the Jesuit with them, and the Jesuit taking up a different position, and the lady listening to our wearisome talk with long patience. At last it struck me that

Dante must be boring her prodigiously, and getting up to go I spoke about trains.

Father Peter accompanied us to the College gate, and on the way there he asked me if I would give the paper that I had read at the luncheon for publication in their review.

'But I thought your brother was the Editor?'

'He is,' Peter answered, 'but that doesn't make any difference.'

As I did not know Tom, the paper went to Peter, and it was published in the *New Ireland Review*. My contribution did not, however, seem to bring me any nearer Father Tom. He did not write to me about it, nor did he write asking me to contribute again; and when I came to live in Dublin, though I heard everybody speaking of him, no one offered to introduce us—not even Peter, whom I often met in the streets and once in the house where the young lady who had introduced us lodged. No one seemed willing to undertake the risk of introducing me to Tom, and the mystery so heightened my desire of Tom's acquaintance that one day I invited Peter to walk round Stephen's Green with me, in the hope that he might say, 'Let's call on Tom.' But at every step my aversion from Peter increased, without ever prompting the thought that I might dislike Tom equally. Peter Finlay is not an attractive name; there seems to be a little snivel in it, but Tom is a fine, robust name, and it goes well with Finlay; and all that I had heard about him had excited my curiosity. My friends were his friends, and they spoke of him as of a cryptogram which nobody could decipher, and

this had set me wondering if I should succeed where others had failed. Lord, how I desired to meet him during those first months! But the months went by without my meeting him. At last the ridiculous superstition glided into my mind that Father Tom looked upon me as a dangerous person, one to be avoided—which was tantamount to the belief that Father Tom lacked courage, that he was afraid of me, as absurd a thought as ever strayed into a man's head. But human nature is such that we seek an explanation in every accident.

One day Æ stopped to speak to somebody in Merrion Street. Turning suddenly, he said: 'Let me introduce you to Father Tom Finlay.' I felt a look of pleasure come into my face, and I knew myself at once to be in sympathy with this long-bodied man, fleshy everywhere—hands, paunch, calves, thighs, forearm, and neck. I liked the russet-coloured face, withered like an apple, the small, bright, affectionate eyes, the insignificant nose, the short grey hair. I liked his speech—simple, direct, and intimate, and his rough clothes. I was whirled away into admiration of Father Tom, and for the next few days thought of nothing but when I should see him again. A few days after, seeing him coming towards me, hurrying along on his short legs (one cannot imagine Father Tom strolling), I tried to summon courage to speak to him. He passed, saluting me, lifting his hat with a smile in his little eyes—a smile which passed rapidly. One sees that his salute and his smile are a mere formality. So I nearly let him pass me, but summoning all my courage at the last moment I called to him, and he

stopped at once, like one ready to render a service to whoever required one.

'I thought of writing to you, Father Tom, about a matter which has been troubling me; but refrained. On consideration it seemed too absurd.'

Father Tom waited for me to continue, but my courage forsook me suddenly, and I began to speak about other things. Father Tom listened—probably to Gaelic League propaganda—with kindness and deference; and it was not till I was about to bid him good-bye that he said:

'But what was the matter to which you alluded in the beginning of our conversation? You said you wished to consult me upon something.'

'Well, it is so stupid that I am afraid to tell you.'

'I shall be glad if you will tell me,' he answered, taking me into his confidence; and I told him that I had been down at the *Freeman* office to ask the Editor if he would publish a letter from me.'

'But Father Tom, what I'm going to say is absurd.'

Father Tom smiled encouragingly; his smile seemed to say, 'Nothing you can say is absurd.'

'Well, it doesn't seem to me that people are dancing enough in Ireland.'

'You mean there isn't enough amusement in Ireland? I quite agree with you.'

'It's a relief to find oneself in agreement with somebody, especially with you, Father Tom.' Father Tom smiled amiably, and then, becoming suddenly serious, I said, 'Ever since I've been here I find myself up against somebody or something,' and I told him about the touring company, admitting that

perhaps the League did not find itself justified in incurring any further expenses. 'But our project for *The Arabian Nights* translation—could anything be more inoffensive—yet the *Freeman* —— What is one to do?'

'One mustn't pay any attention to criticism. The best way is to go on doing what one has to do.' In these words Father Tom seemed to reveal himself a little, and we talked about the cross-road dances. He said he would speak on the subject; and he did, astonishing the Editor of the *Freeman*, and, when I next ran across Father Tom, he told me he had just come back from his holidays in Donegal, where he had attended a gathering of young people—'the young girls came with their mothers and went home with them after the dance.' These words were spoken with a certain fat unction, a certain gross moral satisfaction which did not seem like Father Tom, and I was much inclined to tell him that to dance under the eye of a priest and be taken home by one's mother must seem a somewhat trite amusement to a healthy country girl, unless, indeed, the Irish people experience little passion in their courtships or their marriages. These opinions, were, however, not vented, and we walked on side by side till the silence became painful, and, to interrupt it, Father Tom asked if I had seen Peter lately.

'Peter?' I answered. 'What Peter?' For I had completely forgotten him. Father Tom answered, 'My brother,' and I said, 'No, I haven't seen him this long while,' and we walked on, I listening to Tom with half my mind, and the other half meditating on the difference between the two brothers.

Whereas Peter seemed to me to be sunk in the Order, Father Tom seemed to have struck out and saved himself. It was possible to imagine Peter reading the *Exercises of St. Ignatius*, and by their help quelling all original speculation regarding the value of life and death; for he that reads often of the beatific faces in Heaven, and the flames that lick up the entrails of the damned without ever consuming them, is not troubled with doubt that perhaps, after all, the flower in the grass, the cloud in the sky, and his own beating heart may be parcel of Divinity. Tom must have studied these *Exercises* too, but it would seem that they had influenced Peter more deeply, and, thinking of Peter again, it seemed to me that to them might be fairly attributed the dryness and the angularity of mind that I observed in him. But how was it that these *Exercises* passed so lightly over Tom's mind? For it was difficult to think he had ever been tempted by pantheism. He has had his temptations, like all of us, but pantheism was not one of them, and, on thinking the matter out, the conclusion was forced upon me that he had escaped from the influences of the *Exercises* by throwing himself into all manners and kinds of work. He is the busiest man in Ireland—on every Board, pushing the wheel of education and industry, the editor of a review, the author of innumerable textbooks, a friend to those who need a friend, finding time somehow for everybody and everything, and himself full of good-humour and kindness, outspoken and impetuous, a keen intellect, a ready and incisive speaker, a politician at heart, who, if he had been one in reality, would have led his own party and not been led by it.

One has to think for a while to discover some trace of the discipline of the Order in him. If he were a secular priest he would not bow so elaborately perhaps, nor wear so enigmatic a smile in his eyes. Father Tom is a little conscious of his intellectual superiority, I think. He is looked upon as a mystery by many people, and perhaps is a little eccentric. Intelligence and moral courage are eccentricities in the Irish character, and one would not look for them in a Jesuit priest. It seems to me that I understand him, but one may understand without being able to interpret, and to write Father Tom's *Apology* would require the genius of Robert Browning. He could write his own *Apology*, and if he set himself to the task he would produce a book much more interesting than Newman's. But Father Tom would not care to write about himself unless he wrote quite sincerely, and it would be necessary to tell the waverings that preceded his decision to become a Jesuit. He must have known that by joining the Order he risked losing his personality, the chief business of the Order being to blot out personality. Now, how was this problem solved by Father Tom? Did the Order present such an irresistible attraction to his imagination that he resolved to risk himself in the Order? Or did he know himself to be so strong that he would be able to survive the discipline to which he would have to submit? If he wrote his *Apology* he would have to tell us whether he does things because he likes to do things efficiently, or because he thinks it right they should be done. This chapter should be especially interesting, and the one in which Father Tom would speculate on the relation of his

soul to his intelligence! He values his intelligence —indeed, I think he prides himself on it. As a priest he would have to place his soul above his intelligence, and he would do this very skilfully. . . . But oneself is a dangerous subject for a priest to write about, and perhaps Father Tom avoids the subject, foreseeing the several difficulties that would confront him before he had gone very far. Once his pen was set going, however, he would not abandon his work, and any misunderstanding which might arise out of his *Apology* would revert to the co-operative movement of which he is so able an advocate. 'All the same,' I reflected, 'it's a pity that so delightful an intelligence should be wasted on agriculture,' and I thought how I might ensnare Father Tom's literary instincts.

'I've been thinking, Father Tom,' I said, in our next walk, 'about the book you told me you once wished to write—*The Psychology of Religion*. A more interesting subject I cannot imagine, or one more suited to your genius, and I am full of hope that you will write that book.'

Father Tom muttered a little to himself, and I think I heard him say that there was more important work to be done in Ireland.

'What work?'

Father Tom did not seem to like being questioned, and when I pressed him for an answer, he spoke of the regeneration of the country-side.

'Mere agriculture, that anybody can do; but this book would be yourself, and Ireland is without ideas and literary ideals. We would prefer your book to agriculture, and you must write it. And . . . I

wonder how it is that you have never written a book; you are full of literary interests.'

Then, very coquettishly, Father Tom admitted that he had once written a novel.

'A novel! You must let me see it.' And I stared at him nervously, frightened lest he might refuse.

'I don't think it would interest you.'

'Oh, but it would.' I was afraid to say how much it would interest me—more it seemed to me than any novel by Balzac or Tourguéneff, for it would reveal Father Tom to me. However inadequate the words might be, I should be able to see the man behind them; and I pleaded for the book all the way to the College in Stephen's Green.

'I shall have to go upstairs to my bedroom to fetch it.'

'I'll wait.' And I waited in the hall, saying to myself, 'Something will prevent him from giving it to me. He may stop to think on the stairs, or, overtaken by a sudden scruple, he may go to Father Delany's room to ask his advice. Father Delany may say, "Perhaps it will be better not to lend him the book." If that happens he will have to obey his Superior. So did my thoughts wander till he appeared on the staircase with the book in his hand —a repellent-looking book, bound in red boards, which I grasped eagerly, and stopped under a lamp to examine. The print seemed as uninviting as tin-tacks, but a book cannot be read under a street lamp and in the rain, so I slipped the volume into my overcoat and hurried home.

'Æ, I've discovered a novel by a well-known Irishman—a friend of yours.'

'Have I read it?'

'I don't think so; you'd have spoken about it to me if you had. You'll never guess—the most unlikely man in Ireland.'

'The most unlikely man in Ireland to have written a novel?' Æ answered. 'Then it must be Plunkett.'

'You're near it.'

'Anderson?'

'No.'

'Father Tom?'

I nodded, very proud of myself at having found out something about Father Tom that Æ did not know.

'If Father Tom has written a novel I think I shall be able to read the man behind the words.'

'Just what I said to myself as I came along the Green,' and I watched Æ reading.

'With a cast-iron style like that, a man has nothing to fear from the prying eyes,' and he handed the book back to me.

'But let us,' I replied, 'discover the story that he has to tell.'

Æ looked through some pages and said, 'There seems to be an insurrection going on somewhere; the soldiers have arrived, and are surrounding a castle in the moonlight.' Æ always finds something to say about a book, even if it be in cast-iron, and I loved him better than before, when he said, 'Father Tom loves Ireland.' That Father Tom's love of Ireland should have penetrated his cast-iron style mitigated my disappointment.

'I wonder why he lent me the book?'

'Possibly to prevent you worrying him any more to write *The Psychology of Religion.*'

'Every time I go for a bicycle ride with him, or a walk, I am at him about that book—but it's no use.'

A cloud appeared in Æ's face. 'He suspects Father Tom,' I said to myself, 'of angling for my soul'; and, to tease Æ, I told him that I often spent my evenings talking to Father Tom, in his bedroom, on literary subjects, and that I had arranged with him for the publication of several short stories in the *New Ireland Review.*

'These stories are to be translated into Irish by Taidgh O'Donoghue, and Father Tom will probably get the book accepted as a textbook by the Intermediate Board of Education.'

'But do you think that it was to write these stories that you came from England?'

'Well, for what other purpose do you think I came? And to what better purpose can a man's energy be devoted, and his talents, than the resuscitation of his country's language? What do you think I came for?'

'I hoped that you would do in Ireland what Voltaire did in France, that, whenever Walsh or Logue said something stupid in the papers, you would just reply to them in some sharp cutting letter, showing them up in the most ridiculous light, terrifying them into silence.'

'I'm afraid you were mistaken if you thought that I came to Ireland on any enterprise so trivial. I came to give back to Ireland her language.'

'But what use will her language be to Ireland if she is not granted the right to think?

'The filing of theological fetters will be a task for the next generation.'

'Oh, Moore, Moore, Moore!' he muttered, in his chimney corner. And then, seeing him disappointed, the temptation to tread on his corns overcame me.

'Of what avail,' I asked, 'are our ideas if they be expressed in a worn-out language? Moreover, it is not ideas that we are seeking. An idea is so impersonal; it is yours to-day and the whole world's to-morrow. We would isolate Ireland from what you call ideas, from all European influence; we believe that art will arise in Ireland if we segregate Ireland, and the language will enable us to do that.'

'However fast the language movement might progress,' Æ answered, 'Ireland will not be an Irish-speaking country for the next fifty or sixty years, and a hundred years will have to pass before literature will begin in Ireland; besides, you can't have literature without ideas.'

'The only time Ireland had a literature was when she had no ideas—in the eighth and ninth centuries.'

'Oh, Moore, Moore, Moore!'

The bell rang, and we wondered who the visitor might be. Walter Osborne? John Eglinton? Hughes? Which of our friends? Edward, by all that's holy! We were surprised and pleased to see him, for Edward lives outside my ring of friends; they meet him in the streets, and he is glad to stand and talk with them at the kerb, if the wind be not blowing too sharply. Thinking, therefore, that he had for a wonder yielded to a desire to go out to talk to somebody, my welcome was affectionate. But, alas! he had come to speak to me on some Gaelic

League business, an opera that somebody had written, and hoped he was not interrupting our conversation.

I cried, 'Good Heaven!' and handed him the cigar-box, and we began to talk about Yeats, and when we could find nothing more to say about either his mistakes or his genius, Æ spake to us about Plunkett's 'ideas,' and when these were exhausted we started on Hyde and his mistakes, and these were discussed with passion by Edward and me, for what we wanted was a forward policy.

'If the Boers,' I said, 'had only pressed forward after their first victories——'

'I beg your pardon,' Edward suddenly interrupted, 'but have either of you heard the news? The Boers seem to have brought it off this time,' and he told us that Lord Methuen and fifteen hundred troops had been captured by the Boers.

'But what you say can't be true, Edward. You are joking.'

'No, I'm not. It is all in the evening papers.'

'And you come here to talk Gaelic League business, forgetful of the greatest event that has happened since Thermopylæ. If the Boers should win after all!'

'It will be the same in the end, only prolonging the war.'

His words shocked me, and immediately the conviction overpowered me that nothing would be the same again, and I was lifted suddenly out of my ordinary senses. The walls about me seemed to recede, and myself to be transported ineffably above a dim plain rolling on and on till it mingled with the sky. An encampment was there

in a hallowed light, and one face, stern and strong, yet gentle, was taken by me for the face of the Eternal Good, upreared after combat with the Eternal Evil. What I saw was a symbol of a guiding Providence in the world. 'There is one, there is one!' I exclaimed. 'It is about me and in me.' And all the night long I heard as the deaf hear, and answered as the dumb answer. A night of fierce exultations and prolonged joys murmuring through the darkness like a river. 'For how can it be otherwise,' I cried, starting up in bed. 'Yet I believed this many a year that all was blind chance.' And I fell back and lay like one consumed by a secret fire. Life seemed to have no more for giving, and I cried out: 'It is terrible to feel things so violently. It were better to pass through life quietly like Edward;' and on these words, or soon after, I must have dropped away into sleep.

X

One day, while walking home with John Eglinton from Professor Dowden's, I mentioned that I was thinking of writing a volume of short stories about Irish life.

'Like Tourguéneff's *Tales of a Sportsman*?' And the face that would be ugly if unlighted by the intelligence lit up. 'And you will require how many stories to make the volume?'

'Nine, ten, or a dozen—a year's work.'

'Do you think you'll be able to find subjects all the while?'

The question kindled my vanity, and I answered:

'Tourguéneff wrote *The Tales of a Sportsman* in Paris, and sent them to a Russian newspaper week by week. Maupassant contributed two stories a week to the *Gil Blas*, but it does not follow that because Maupassant and Tourguéneff were always able to find new subjects that I shall, and Father Tom restricting the zone of my stories. The stories I am thinking of are longer than Maupassant's.'

As soon as I had bidden him good-bye my thoughts went away in search of subjects, and before many steps were taken I remembered Dick Lennox, the fat man in *A Mummer's Wife*. He used to lodge in a factory-town in Lancashire in the house of a maiden lady, and one day she opened a drawer and showed him her wedding-gown. It had never gone to church, but how she had lost her swain it was impossible to remember—Dick Lennox may never have told me—but the wedding-gown I remembered, and a new story was woven round it that same evening, and one that pleased Father Tom so much that he wished to publish the English text with the Irish.

The publication of the English text seemed to me to render useless the publication of the story, and Father Tom failed to persuade me; and only Taidgh O'Donoghue's translation appeared in the *New Ireland Review*—an ideal translation, if I can judge it from Rolleston's retranslation, full of exquisite little turns of phrase. Kuno Meyer—and who knows better?—tells me that the Irish text exhales the folk-flavour that I sought for and missed, and Hyde, who will never take sides on any subject, admits that the Irish version gives him more pleasure, 'for, though I often meet good English, it is seldom I

come across a good piece of Irish.' *Alms-giving* and *The Clerk's Quest* were published subsequently in the *New Ireland Review*, and both pleased Father Tom—*The Clerk's Quest* especially.

It was not till the fourth month that I began to feel the restrictions of the *New Ireland Review* subjects. I had plenty in stock, but not one that I thought Father Tom would think suitable. *Home Sickness* might go into the *Review*, but, somehow, I could not see it included in a school-book—*The Exile* still less, and the worst of it was that *The Exile* was nearly written; it had taken a fortnight to write—a longish short story, and a downright good subject for narrative, if I may say so without impertinence. And it was for no fault in the writing that Father Tom rejected it. He liked the story, and he liked *Home Sickness* even better than *The Exile*, but he made me feel that it could hardly be included in a collection of stories which he could recommend as a textbook for the Intermediate.

'Yes,' I answered, 'I quite see. Stories about things, without moral or literary tendencies—stories like Tourguéneff's, of the horse that is stolen and recovered again, so the owner thinks at first, but after a little while he begins to think the horse less wonderful than the horse he lost, and the uncertainty preys upon his mind to such an extent that he ends by shooting the horse.

'That is what we want—a wonderful story, and one excellently well suited to a textbook, for all children love horses; it is one of their first interests.'

But my mind seemed closed for the time being to the stories suitable to a textbook, and wide open to

those that would lead me away from Father Tom and the *New Ireland Review*. And this was a grief to me, for I knew full well that my contributions to the *New Ireland Review* were the link that bound me to my friend, if he will allow me to call him friend. We shall not meet again, and if we do, of what use? We are like ships; all and sundry have destinies and destinations. There is very little Nietzsche in me, but this much of him I remember, that we must pursue our courses valiantly, come what may. Father Tom and I had lain side by side in harbour for a while, but the magnetism of the ocean drew me, and I continued to write, feeling all the while that my stories were drawing me away from Catholic Ireland.

Story followed story, each coming into my mind before the story on the blotting-pad was finished, and each suggested by something seen or something heard. When I was called to Castlebar to fulfil the office of High Sheriff, Father Lyons showed me the theatre he had built, and it was Æ, I think, who told me that he knew a priest who lived in the great waste lying between Crossmalina and Belmullet. He once liked reading, but he now spent his evenings knitting. 'I can see your priest,' I cried, and wrote *The Playhouse in the Waste*, and *A Letter to Rome*. A little wreath of stories was woven one evening at the Moat House out of the gossip of a maid who was prone to relate the whole country-side, and she did this so well that she seemed to be relating a village Odyssey, incident following incident with bewildering prodigality. To omit any seemed a losing. But in writing order and sequence are necessary, and all I could make use of were the

four little tales entitled *Some Parishioners.* It is a pity that more time was not spent on the writing of them, but the English language was still abhorrent to me; and my text was looked upon by me as a mere foundation for an Irish, and the stories might never have been finished, or not finished at the time, for I could trust Taidgh O'Donoghue to fill up the ruts for me, if it had not been for Stella's interest in them. It was part of our bargain that I should read them to her in the drawing-room in the Moat House after dinner, and her mind being one of those large tidy minds that can find no pleasure in broken stories or harsh or incomplete sentences, I was urged to put the finishing hand to the stories before sending them to Taidgh.

'Whose task,' she said, 'will be much lightened thereby.'

'What you say is quite true. It is difficult to translate badly-constructed sentences.'

We stood by the bridge, looking into the moat, hearing water faintly trickling through the summer tangle of wild weeds and flowers. Stella knew the names of all—that one three or four feet high with long, narrow leaves and reddish flowers was willow-weed. She pointed out the mallow to me, and the patches of wild forget-me-nots growing here and there where the water shallowed; and wondering why was it not deeper, for a great deal of water came into it from the stream, we fetched a pole and discovered the mud to be five or six feet deep. The pole encountered a flagged bottom everywhere, 'which proved,' I said, 'that in former times trout had been bred in it.'

But if trout had once been bred in the moat, trout could be bred in it again, and Stella was at last persuaded that the cleansing of the moat would be a pleasant summer's work for the villagers, and that we should take great interest in the laying down of the spawn and in netting the fish when they had grown to half a pound. Trout grew to that size in a piscina, and, talking of the pleasure of the netting, she trailing the net on one side of the stream and I on the other, we passed round the house into the rich garden she had planted; the scent of the stock filled the evening air, and that of the tobacco plant was extraordinarily intense.

'I think you care more for weeds than for flowers,' she said.

Her little hardship was my lack of interest in her garden, for a garden was part of her instinct as much as her painting—an inheritance from her father, who could not be long in any house before the needs of the garden reached him, and he would ask if he might go out and attend to the flowers. The instinct of a garden is a beautiful one, and my clearest remembrance of Stella is a tall figure in the evening light moving through the flower-beds.

In front of us was a great sweeping cornfield covering several acres, rare in Ireland, where all the country is grass; and on the other side the Valley of the Liffey extended mile after mile, blue hills gathering the landscape up into its rest at last. Our eyes sought for Rathfarnham, four or five miles away, and we spoke of the two rivers, the Liffey and the Dodder, and of the herdsmen that followed the cattle. Ireland was new to us both, almost as new

to me as it was to her, and we were interested in the country we had come to live in, she more playfully and more humanely than I, being a painter, whereas the Boer War still continued to pester me, driving me forward relentlessly, and making me a tiresome companion at times. Men never get free from morality, only women. Stella's cordial unmoral appreciation of Ireland was a great help to me, and her fine ear for idiom drew my attention to the beauty of peasant speech in our walks through the Valley of the Liffey, her eyes measuring the landscape all the while, noting the shapely trees and the lonely farmhouses, the subjects of her pictures. These led us sometimes as far as Rathfarnham and Tallaght. Another of Stella's instincts was for camping out; she and Florence used to spend nights together in the Sussex woods, and now, inspired by the summer-time, she began to speak to me of a night out upon the mountain. Stella never asked me directly to do anything; she relied on suggestion; and one evening we drove to the end of the mountain road, and leaving the pony and trap with a cottager, walked half a mile farther with our rugs and lay down under the ruins of the Hell Fire Club. The dark lines of the hills showed against the last traces of purple in the sky, and I listened to Stella telling me that I must try to sleep at once, for the dawn began soon after two and one awoke naturally as soon as the sun began to shine. Hard by is the gaunt ruin of an unfinished castle, begun with reckless extravagance —by whom? Names slip away, but the sight of the ruin against the hillside remains distinct.

And for two long summers we drove and walked

through these neighbourhoods. Coming one day upon a picturesque farmhouse, and wondering who the folk might be that lived within walls as strong as a fortress, we wandered round the house, looking into the great areas. The farmer introduced us to his daughter, a pretty red-headed girl, about twenty, who said they were just going to sit down to tea, and would we join them? Among other things, they spoke of a cousin from America who was coming to Ireland for a rest; he had been all through Cuba, reporting the war for the American papers. The incident excited my imagination, and as we walked home through the summer evening it seemed to me that I should find nobody more representative of a certain side of Irish character than this journalist, who went to Cuba because he wanted to see some fighting, and at the end of the war was taken with a desire to see the Old Country, and before we reached the Moat House I had begun to see him strolling about Tara, dreaming of Ireland's past, till he fell in love with the farmer's pretty daughter. He would live with her, loving her tenderly, sensual love bridging over, for a while, intellectual differences. And when he could no longer bear with her soft Catholic eyes, he would desert her honourably. This story seemed to me so representative of Irish life that I decided to include it in the collection, though in length it did not correspond with the others. Every one in the volume entitled *The Untilled Field* had helped me to understand my own country, but it was while writing *The Wild Goose* that it occurred to me for the first time that, it being impossible to enjoy independence of body

and soul in Ireland, the thought of every brave-hearted boy is to cry, 'Now, off with my coat so that I may earn five pounds to take me out of the country.'

'They bring their Catholicism with them wherever they go, and cling to it in spite of the example of all the world. Every race gets the religion it deserves, and only as policemen, pugilists, and priests have they succeeded, here and there a successful lawyer, but nothing more serious. The theory of the germ cell floated in my mind, and I said: 'It may be that Nature did not intend them to advance beyond the stage of the herdsmen—the finest herdsmen in the world!' I cried, rising from the composition of *The Wild Goose*. 'They were that in the beginning, when the greater part of Ireland was forest and marsh, with great pasture lands through which long herds of cattle wandered from dawn to evening, watched over by barbarous men in kilts with terrible dogs; and since those days we have lost the civilization that obtained in the monasteries. We have declined in everything except our cattle . . . and our herdsmen, the finest in the world, divining the steak in the bullock with the same certainty as the Greek divined the statue in the block of marble.'

My discovery produced in me a kind of rapture, and I sat looking at my Monet for a long while, thinking that perhaps, after all, it is unnecessary for a race to produce pictures or literature or sculpture or music, for to do one thing extremely well justifies the existence of a race, and the beef-steaks that Ireland produces justify Ireland—in a way, for

though the Irish have produced the finest steaks, they have never invented a sauce for the steak; and I fell to thinking that if some meditative herdsman, while leaning over a gate, had been inspired to compose a sauce whereby the steak might be eaten with relish, the Irish race would be able to hold up its head in the world. One finds excuses always for one's country's shortcomings, and it pleased me to think that if none had imagined *Sauce Bernaise* it was because his attention was always needed to keep the cattle from straying. There were wolves in Ireland always lurking round the herd, ready to separate a heifer or a calf from the protection of the bulls. But to find an excuse for the monks dwelling in commodious monasteries is more difficult. The talk of the monks must have been frequently about the pleasures of the table, yet none was inspired to go to the Prior with the sacred word *Bernaise* upon his lips. That one would have secured an immortality as secure as Chateaubriand, who is read no more, but is eaten every day. The intellect perishes, but the belly is always with us. Or may we acquit the race of lack of imagination, and lay the blame upon the Irish language, which is, perhaps, too harsh and bitter for such a buttery word as *Bernaise?* And could a language in which there is no butter be capable of inventing a succulent sauce? It may be that the Irish language was merely intended for the sale of bullocks —a language that has never been to school, as John Eglinton once said. If it had only fled to the kitchen one might forgive it for having played truant —the Irish language, a language that has never been

spoken in a drawing-room, only in rude towers, and very like those towers are the blocks of rough sound that a Gaelic speaker hurls at one when he speaks. Whereas one can hardly imagine any other language but French being spoken along the beautiful winding roads of France, lined with poplar-trees, and about the hillsides dotted with red-tiled roofs, and behind the pierced green shutters, which enchant us when we see them as the train moves on towards Paris from Amiens. The French language is implicit in the balconies, lanterns, *perrons*, that we see as the train nears Paris, and still more implicit in the high-pitched roofs of the château of Fontainebleau when *allâmes* and *allâtes* came naturally into conversation. In a trice we leave the Court of Louis XV. for a fête at Melun, and there, though the past tenses are no longer in use, the language still sparkles; it foams and goes to the head, a lovely language, very like champagne. True that the English language has never been much in the kitchen nor in the vineyard, but it has been spoken in the dales and along the downs, and there is a finer breeze in it than there is in French, and a bite in it like Elizabethan ale—all the same, a declining language; 'thee' and 'thou' have been lost beyond hope of restoration, and many words that I remember in common use are now nearly archaic; a language wearied with child-bearing, and I pondered the endless poetry of England, and admitted English literature to be the most beautiful, Boer War or no Boer War. Whereas the Irish language, notwithstanding its declensions and its grammatical use of 'thee' and 'thou,' has failed. As Bergin said once

to me, 'We did nothing with it when we had it.' By this, did he mean that the Irish race was never destined to rise above the herdsman? And if he did, his instinctive judgment is important; it shows that we know ourselves. 'We see,' I cried, 'the rump-steak in the animal as clearly as the Greek saw the statue in the marble,' and the epigram pleased me so much that I felt I must go out at once to collogue with somebody.

But it was eleven o'clock, and no one is available at that hour but dear Edward; a few hundred yards are as nothing to one with a passion for literary conversation; and away I went down Ely Place, across Merrion Row, through Merrion Street, and as soon as the corner of Clare Street was turned, I began to look out for the light above the tobacconist's shop. The light was there! My heart was as faint as a lover's, and the serenade which I used to beguile him down from his books rose to my lips. He will only answer to this one, or to a motive from *The Ring*. And it is necessary to whistle very loudly, for the trams make a great deal of noise, and Edward sometimes dozes on the sofa.

On the other side is a public-house, and the serenading of Edward draws comments from the topers as they go away wiping their mouths. One has to choose a quiet moment between the trams; and when the serenade has been whistled twice, the light of Edward's candle appears, coming very slowly down the stairs, and there he is in the doorway, if anything larger than life, in the voluminous grey trousers, and over his shoulders a buff jacket which he wears in the evening. Two short flights of stairs

and we are in his room. It never changes—the same litter from day to day, from year to year, the same old and broken mahogany furniture, the same musty wall-paper, dusty manuscripts lying about in heaps, and many dusty books. If one likes a man one likes his habits, and never do I go into Edward's room without admiring the old prints that he tacks on the wall, or looking through the books on the great round table, or admiring the little sofa between the round table and the Japanese screen, which Edward bought for a few shillings down on the quays—a torn, dusty, ragged screen, but serviceable enough; it keeps out the draught; and Edward is especially susceptible to draughts, the very slightest will give him a cold. Between the folds of the screen one will find a small harmonium of about three octaves, and on it a score of Palestrina. As well might one try to play the Mass upon a flute, and one can only think that it serves to give the keynote to a choir-boy. On the table is a candlestick made out of white tin, designed probably by Edward himself, for it holds four candles. He prefers candles for reading, but he snuffs them when I enter and lights the gas, offers me a cigar, refills his churchwarden, and closes his book.

'What book are you reading, Edward?'

'I am reading Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, but it is very long and rather prosy, and the fifth volume is inexpressibly tedious. It doesn't seem to me that I shall ever get through it.'

'But if it doesn't interest you why do you read it?'

Oh, I don't like to leave a book.'

'You prefer reading a tiresome book to my conversation.'

'But you live so far away.'

'How far, Edward? Five hundred yards.'

'And after dinner I like to get home to my pipe. You see, I'm at business all day; I've business relations with a great number of people. Our lives aren't the same; and I assure you that in the evening a quiet hour is a luxury to me.'

'But how can you find business to do all day? There is Mass in the morning and the Angelus at twelve?'

'I know what all that kind of talk is worth.' And Edward puffed sullenly at his churchwarden while I assured him that I was thinking of his play.

'All this public business,' I said, 'leaves very little time for your work.'

'In the afternoon between four and seven I get a couple of hours. Yesterday I had a run; I got off thirty lines, but to-day I'm stuck again, and shall have to invent something to get one of the characters off the stage naturally. You see, I'm still in the pencil stage. In about two years I shall be in ink, and then I'll give you the play to read.'

As my help would not be needed for the next two years, it seemed to me that I might speak of *The Wild Goose*, and Edward listened, giving his whole mind to the story.

'But why,' he asked, 'should Ned Carmody object to his wife suckling her baby?'

'He fears that it might spoil her figure.'

'Is that so? I didn't know.' And he puffed at his pipe in silence. 'But do you think Ned Carmody would bother?'

'You think it introduces a streak of Sir Frederick

Leighton? But who can say that an æsthetic aspiration may not break out even in a Celt, who is but a herdsman, the finest in the world,' and I launched my epigram. But it met with no response. Edward's face deepened into monumental solemnity, and I understood that the proposition that the Irish race was not destined to rise above the herdsman was too disagreeable to be entertained. 'Shutting our eyes to facts will not change the facts.'

'It the eighth and ninth centuries——'

'The decline of art was coincident with the union of the Irish Church with Rome; till then Ireland was a Protestant country.'

'A Protestant country! St. Patrick a Protestant!'

'Protestant in the sense that he merely preached Christianity, and the Irish Church was Protestant up to the eleventh or twelfth century; I don't know the exact date.' I crossed the room to get myself another cigar; and returned, muttering something about a peasant people that had never risen out of the vague emotions of the clan.

'We were talking about a very interesting question —that as soon as the Irish Church became united to Rome, art declined in Ireland. That isn't a matter of opinion, but of fact.'

Edward spoke of the Penal Laws.

'But the Penal Laws aren't hereditary, like syphilis. It is impossible to deny that Irish Catholics have written very little. Father Tom admitted that.'

Edward was curious to hear if I still went for bicycle rides in the country with Father Tom, and smoked cigarettes with him in his bedroom.

'What can it matter how intimate my relations

may or may not be with Father Tom? We are talking now on a serious subject, Edward, and I was about to tell you, when you interrupted me, that one evening, as I was walking round the green with Father Tom, I said to him; "It is strange that Catholics have written so little in Ireland." "It is, indeed," he answered, "and Maynooth is a case in point; after a hundred years of education it has not succeeded in producing a book of any value, not even a theological work."'

'I don't know that Father Tom has produced anything very wonderful himself.'

'Very likely he hasn't. Father Tom's lack of original literary inspiration is a matter of no importance to anyone except to Father Tom. The question before us is, Which is at fault—the race or Catholicism?'

Edward would not admit that it could be Catholicism.

'Don't you think that yourself have suffered?' I said, as I went down the stairs. 'You burnt a volume of poems, and if Father Tom had not abandoned *The Psychology of Religion* he would have found himself up against half a dozen heresies before he had written fifty pages.'

It seemed to me that I was on the threshold of a great discovery.

XI

'Highly favoured, indeed, am I among authors,' I said, pushing open the wicket; but before many turns had been taken up and down the greensward, I began to fear that my reading had been too parti-

cular. My heart sank at the prospect of the years I should have to spend in the National Library, for a knowledge of all the literature of the world was necessary for the writing of the article I had in my mind. Then with a rising heart I remembered that I could engage the services of some poor scholar—John Eglinton knew for certain many who had read everything without having learnt to make use of their learning. 'My quickest way will be to lay the nose of one of these fellows on the scent; he will run it through many literatures, and with the results of his reading before me I shall be able to deal Catholicism such a blow as has not been dealt since the Reformation.'

A light breeze rustled the lilacs, and I stood for a long time, forgetful of my idea, seeking within the long, pointed leaves for the blossom breaking into purple and white. It seemed to me that the tranquil little path under the bushes was just the one Pater would choose for philosophic meditation, but, feeling that the sunlight beguiled my mind into thought, I wandered round the garden, thinking, while noticing the changes that had come into it within the last few days. 'The great ash by the garden gate seems to be making some progress. The catkins are gone, and in about three weeks the plumy foliage will be fluttering in the light breezes of the summer-time. The laburnum blossom is still enclosed in grey-green ears about the size of a caterpillar,' I added, 'with here and there a spot of yellow.' And pondering on Nature's unending miracles, I walked under the hawthorns, stopping, of course, to admire the hard little leaves 'like the

medals that Catholics wear,' I said, on my way to the corner where the Solomon-seal flourishes year after year, and the blooms of the everlasting pea creep up the wall nine or ten feet, to the level of the street, hard by the rosemary, which should perfume the whole garden, but the smoke from Plunkett's chimney robs the flowers of their perfume. The little blossom freckling the dark green spiky foliage held me at gaze. Above the rosemary is thick ivy; it was clipped close a few years ago, but it is again swarming up the wall, and Gogarty, the arch-mocker, the author of all the jokes that enable us to live in Dublin—Gogarty, the author of the Limericks of the Golden Age, the youngest of my friends, full in the face, with a smile in his eyes and always a witticism on his lips, overflowing with quotation, called yesterday to ask me to send a man with a shears, saying, 'Your ivy is threatening my slates.' A survival of the Bardic Age he is, reciting whole ballads to me when we go for walks; and when I tell him my great discovery he will say, 'Sparrows and sweet peas are as incompatible as Literature and Dogma; and you will cut the ivy, won't you?'

And wandering across my greensward, I came to my apple-trees, now in bridal attire; 'Not a petal yet fallen, but to-morrow or the day after the grass will be covered with them,' I said. Gogarty told me yesterday how the poet rose early to see the daisy open. He describes himself 'a-kneeling always till it unclosed was upon the softë, sweetë, smallë grass.' But if he liked the grass so much, why did he love the daisy? For if sparrows and sweet-peas are incompatible, it may be said with equal truth

that the daisy is the grass's natural enemy; and worse than daisies are dandelions. A few still remain, though poison was poured upon them last year. My flower-beds are a sad spectacle; wall-flowers straggling—sad are they as Plunkett's beard. Sweet peas once grew there; the first year a tall hedge sprung up, despite the College of Science; for the soil was almost virgin then, and it sent forth plenty of canterbury bells, columbine, poppies and larkspur; but year by year my flowers have died, and the garden will now grow only a few lilies and pinks, carnations, larkspur, poppies. At that moment a smut fell across my knuckles, and, looking up, I saw a great black cloud issuing from the chimney of the College of Science. 'Isn't it a poor thing that all my flowers should die, so that a few students should be allowed the privilege of burning their eyelids for the sake of Ireland?'

My garden is but a rood, and the only beauty it can boast of is its grass and its apple-trees—one tree as large as a house, under whose boughs I might dine in the summer-time were it not for the smuts from Plunkett's chimney. It is the biggest apple-tree in all Ireland, and a blackbird sings in it all the summer-time. One of its great boughs is dying, and will have to be cut away lest it should poison the rest of the tree. My garden is but a rood, and following the walk round the square of 'glad grass,' I am back again in a few minutes, admiring tall bushes flourishing over the high wall, and, as if to greet me, the robin sings the little roundelay that he utters all the year—a saucy little bird that will take bread from my hand in winter, but now it is

easy to see he is thinking of his mate, whose nest is in the great tangle of traveller's-joy that covers the southern wall, somewhere near the bush where a thrush is sitting on her eggs—not so bold a bird as the robin. My curiosity last year drove her from her eggs; and it will be well for me to walk the other way.

Now, which will my countrymen choose—Literature or Dogma?

It is difficult to think in a garden where amorous birds are going hither and thither, so amorous that one cannot but be interested in them. If one had to think about books, one would choose to think of Gogarty's extravagances, or Gogarty's remembrances of the poets; and these would be especially pleasant while a blackbird is singing the same rich lay that he sang by a lake's edge a thousand years ago. It delighted a certain hermit-poet, and one is grateful to him for having recorded his pleasure in the bird's song, and for the adjective that defines it, and to Kuno Meyer, who discovered the old Irish poem and translated it.

My garden is an enchantment in the spring, and I sat bewitched by the sunlight and by my idea.

A man of letters goes into a garden with an idea; he and his idea spend happy days under apple-boughs in the sun; he plays with his idea as a mother with her child, chasing it about the lilac-bushes; sometimes the child cries with rage, and the mother cannot pacify her baby, but, however naughty her baby may be, she never wearies; her patience is endless, and the patience of a man of letters is endless too. His idea becomes unmanageable, but he

does not weary of it; and then his idea grows up, just like the child, passing from blue smock and sash into knickerbockers, in other words into typewriting, and as every mother looks back upon the days of smocks and sashes, we authors look back upon the days when our ideas were meditated in a garden within hearing of amorous sparrows in the ivy, the soft coo—for it is nearly a coo—of the jackdaw as he passes to some disused chimney where he nests, the shrill of the starling and the reiterated little rigmarole of the chaffinch. The swallows arrive in Dublin in the middle of May; they fly over my garden in the June evenings, and I continued to think of them coming hither over the sea—'like my thoughts,' I said. And while listening to the breeze in the apple-boughs, my thoughts drifted unconsciously across the centuries to the beginning of Christian literature. 'It began well,' I said, 'with the *Confessions* of that most sympathetic of saints, Augustine, who was not all theology, but began his life, and began it well, in free thought and free love; his mistress and his illegitimate child endear him to us, and the music of his prose—those beautiful pages when he and Monica, his mother, stand by a window overlooking the Tiber! We are all spirit while we read the flight of his soul and Monica's Godward, each sentence lifting them a little higher till he and she seem to dissolve before our eyes in white rapture.'

I have read that Augustine owed something of the ecstasy of his style to the Alexandrian mystics—and this is not unlikely, for he came from Africa and saw the end of paganism and the beginning of Christi-

anity. . . . He was Julian's contemporary, a thing which never struck anybody before. Augustine and Julian—how wonderful! Landor should have thought of the learned twain as a subject for dialogue, or Shakespeare might have taken Julian for hero. The ascetic Emperor was a subject for him . . . but I am thinking casually. Shakespeare could not have done much with Julian. So perhaps it is well that one day the sudden interruption of his secretary, Ben Jonson, jerked his thoughts away from Julian, leaving the Emperor for Ibsen—two rather clumsy dramas, *Emperor and Galilean*, containing, however, many splendid scenes. But there was more in Julian than the bleak Norwegian could understand, and Ibsen does little more than follow the bare outline that history gave him, including, of course, the story of the old priest sitting on the steps of a fallen temple with a goose in his lap—the only trace of ancient worship that the Emperor could discover in the countries he passed through while leading his army against the Persians.

Were Gogarty here he would tell me the verses in which Swinburne includes the Emperor's last words; unable to remember them, I loitered, amused by the paraphrase of the lines from the *Hymn to Proserpine* that the circumstance of the moment had put into my head:

'Thou hast conquered, O pale Galileo, the world has moved on since thy death,
We cared hardly tuppence for Leo, and on Pius we waste not our breath.'

'The last line is weak,' I said,—'so weak that I

must ask Gogarty to alter it, but I like "The world has moved on since thy death."'

I should like Ibsen's Julian better if some reason for the Emperor's opposition to Christianity were given; a mere caprice for the ancient divinities is not sufficient for a philosopher who might have foreseen the Middle Ages. A vision for him would have been a procession of monks, and over against them the lights of the Renaissance beginning among the Tuscan hills. I should like him to have foreseen Borgia. But which would he have liked —Alexander or Cæsar? Neither. Their paganism was not at all of the kind that appealed to Julian, and the revival of Christianity with Luther at its head would have shocked him more than the gross materialism into which it had declined. He would have hated the Christian monk who said that every man likes a wife with rosy cheeks and white legs, which is true of every man except Julian, who chose for wife one whose age might be pleaded for his abstinence from her bed. Julian is one of Nature's perversities; none but Nature herself would have thought of setting up an ascetic mystic to oppose Christianity—a real believer, for he prayed at the ancient shrines, looking on the Gods not merely as symbols, like many of his predecessors, but as Divine entities.

But after his death the belief gained ground everywhere that the secret of life and death had been discovered in a monastery; and men no longer went to the academies of the arts, but into the wilderness; and there interpreted the fable according to their temperaments. Christianity was soon split up into

sects, all at variance one with the other; texts which could not be explained by common sense were disputed by the theologians, till the founding of a town became less important than the meaning of a text: that one 'he knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son,' was the cause of much perplexity and comment, the opinions of the theologians being divided, many going farther than the strict letter of the text, averring that nothing had ever happened under the quilt in Galilee before or after the birth of the Saviour, Joseph being a virgin even as Mary. And battles were fought and many slain because men could not agree about the meaning of the word *filioque*. The world went clean mad about the new God just come over from Asia. They had been coming for some seven hundred years. The first, or one of the first, was Mithras, and he had obtained a very considerable following; none can say why he failed to capture Europe. He brought the Trinity with him, I think,—certainly the sacraments, but he forgot the pathetic story of the Passion. Mark wrote it well, and his excellent narrative turned the scale. Mithras was many hundred years before Jesus, and he was succeeded by—— my scholar would come in useful here. He would furnish me with a list of Gods, whereas the only names that come up in my mind at the moment are Adonis, Cybele, Attis, Isis, Serapis; but there were many more. And as for religions—they came like locusts from the desert—Arians, Nestorians, Donatists, Manicheans. A century or a century and a half later the Mohammedans poured out of Arabia, crying, 'Allah, Allah,' all round Persia and Asia Minor,

fighting their way along the North of Africa, crossing the Straits into Spain, getting through the Pyrenees and the South of France as far as Tours.

The French seem to have been especially created to save us from Asiatics; they defeated Attila at Châlons two hundred years before; his God would not have plagued us with theology; he was plain Mr. Booty. But if it had not been for the defeat of the Arabs at Tours we might have all been Mohammedans, and the question arises whether the succeeding centuries would have been crueller under Allah than they were under Jesus. The Middle Ages were the cruellest of all the centuries, and the most ignorant. It would be difficult to choose between Byzantine mosaics and arabesques; literature disappeared after the death of Augustine. Catholicism claims the cathedrals; the claim is a valid one, and it claims Dante, born in 1265, the great anti-cleric, he, who walks before men's eyes like a figure risen from a medieval tomb, pedantic, cruel, unclean, like the Middle Ages, venting his hatred on Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, priests, and on his own countrymen, hating them with the hatred of his own Asiatic God. But Dante is likewise the tremulous lover. There is the poet of the *Vita Nuova* and the poet of *The Divine Comedy*. Landor reveals both to us. The first in a love-scene in a garden between Dante and Beatrice. The twain have wandered from some *fête* in progress, in the garden itself or in an adjacent house, to some quiet marble seat shaded by myrtles, and in this dialogue we see Dante pale and tremulous with passion, and Beatrice admonishing him with grave eyes and the

wisdom of the seraphic doctor that Dante met in the *Paradiso*. One thinks of *Tristan* (the second act), when Beatrice begs her lover not to take her hands violently; she recognizes him as heir to all eternity, and her mission to inspire him to write the poem which will outlast all other poems and make them and their love wander for ever among the generations. Not in this dialogue, but in another, Landor sets Petrarch and Boccaccio discoursing on their great contemporary—Petrarch only saw Dante once, Boccaccio never saw him, but they talk about him as if he were their contemporary. Landor does not seek to differentiate between Boccaccio's criticism of Dante and Petrarch's; ideas are impersonal, and every wise remark about Dante might have been uttered by either speaker. But would Petrarch have accepted the statement that less than a twentieth part of *The Divine Comedy* is good, as representing his own opinions? And would Boccaccio admit that he loved *The Divine Comedy* merely because it brings him happier dreams? It is Petrarch who says that the filthiness of some passages in *The Divine Comedy* would disgrace the drunkenest horse-dealer, and that the names of such criminals are recorded by the poet as would be forgotten by the hangman in six months. A little later in the dialogue Boccaccio reminds Petrarch that the scenes from *The Inferno*, *The Purgatorio*, and *The Paradiso* are little more than pictures from the walls of churches turned into verse, and that in several of these we detect the cruelty, the satire and the indecency of the Middle Ages. Yes, and Boccaccio adds that he does not see the necessity for three verses out of

six of the third canto of *The Inferno,* and he does not hesitate to say that there are passages in which he cannot find his way, and where he suspects the poet could not show it to him. Petrarch answers quickly that Dante not only throws together the most opposite and distant characters, he even makes Jupiter and the Saviour the same person, and in a prose lofty and hallowed, the Italian poets continue their ingenious fault-finding page after page, but neither doubts the justice of placing Dante higher than any of the Latin poets.

It is disappointing that I cannot remember to whom to attribute 'They have less hair-cloth about them and smell less cloisterly, yet they are only choristers.' It sounds more like Boccaccio than Petrarch, and this placing of Dante above the Latin poets endears one to Landor, for he loved the Latin poets and understood them very well. He was the last of the Latinists, and a great deal of himself must have found expression in Latin verse. It is likely that Horace would read Landor's verses with more indulgence than the verses of any other Latinist; Landor's refinement of feeling and sense of beauty would find abundant expression in his Latin. And Horace would relish Landor's wisdom. But is it sure—is it certain that Landor's wisdom would not seem oppressive at times? Wisdom estranges an author from his fellows, and in no writer does the intellect shine more clearly than in Landor. He was ruled by his intelligence; he did not like Dante instinctively; it was his intellect that enabled him to see what is beautiful in Dante—that which Dante owed to the Renaissance—and to forget the filth—

that which Dante owed to the Middle Ages. As well as I remember, neither poet refers to Dante's anti-clericalism; its importance was overlooked by Landor; but Boccaccio and Petrarch would not have overlooked it; either might have approved or disapproved, but one or the other would have mentioned it, and Petrarch might have had qualms for the faith of the next generation; he might have foreseen easily that the anti-clericalism of one generation would be followed by a pagan revival. And this is what happened. Borgia was on the throne, two hundred years later, and a reactionary priest was being told that everybody was prepared to admit in theory that Jesus was an interesting figure, but, for the moment, everybody was anxious to talk about a new torso that had been unearthed. But instead of running to see the Greek God, and contributing to the general enthusiasm by his praise of the pectoral muscles, Savonarola gathered a few disciples about him and told the people that a much greater discovery would have been part of the tree on which the Saviour hung. Of course, Borgia did not like signing the order for the burning of Savonarola and his monks, but he could not allow the Renaissance to be stopped, and if he had not intervened, the Renaissance would have stopped at Fra Angelico; Pinturricchio might have been allowed to continue his little religious anecdotes, but Mantegna would have been told that his vases and draperies hark back to the heathen, before Christ was, and as likely as not Botticelli's light-hearted women might have had tears painted into their eyes. The world had had enough of the Middle Ages, and the reaction was a

Pope who loved his own daughter Lucretia, and ordered the murder of his own son. Or was it Cæsar who planned this murder? A wonderful day it was when he pursued the Pope's chamberlain into the Vatican and stabbed him to death in his father's arms, for such a deed attests, perhaps better than any argument, that men's thoughts had turned definitely from the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Earth had been swallowed up in theology for some eight or nine centuries, and it was the genius of the sixteenth century to disinter it, and to make merry in it without giving a thought to the superman—the silly vanity of a Christian gone wrong. In this re-arisen kingdom were all the arts, sculpture, painting, literature, and music, and with the discovery of America the world seemed indefinitely enlarged. A hint was in the air that the world moved. Borgia sat on the Papal chair; Cæsar his son might have succeeded him; and, with the genius of Italy, insurgent since 1265, behind him, it is not unlikely that he would have triumphed where Napoleon, another Italian, one born out of due time failed. Machiavelli tells us that Cæsar's plans were well laid and would not have miscarried, had it not been for a certain fatal accident, his eating of the poisoned meats at a banquet which Alexander had prepared for a dozen Cardinals, his enemies. Alexander ate, too, of these meats, and being an old man, succumbed to the poison; Cæsar recovered partially, and when he staggered convalescent from his bed, he was told that his father had been a fortnight in the tomb, and that a new Pope, entirely out of sympathy with the Renaissance, had been elected. Cæsar had to

withdraw from Rome to Neppi, where he nearly died of a second attack—of what? Of Roman fever?—for I do not believe in the story of the poisoned meats. The French were on foot for Naples, and having nowhere to lay his head, he begged permission to return to Rome.

My gardener's rake ceased suddenly, and, opening my eyes, I saw him snail-hunting among the long blades of the irises.

It had been raining in the morning; he would get a good many; and my thoughts dropped back into a pleasant meditation regarding the nature of man and our lack of reverence for Cæsar, who represented, more than anyone who ever lived, the qualities that have enabled men to raise themselves above the lower animals. He was, I remember now, allowed to return to Rome; but no sooner was he there than it became plain to him that it would be useless to reassume the Cardinalate which he had abandoned. He had no chance of being elected to the Papacy, the late Pope having created many new Cardinals, all of whom were determined to oppose him. But Cæsar had influence among the Spanish Cardinals, and he promised their votes to Julius in exchange for the office of Standard-Bearer to the Church. Julius agreed, but Cæsar was deprived of the office, or perhaps it was never given to him. It seems a pity that Catholic history should be robbed of so picturesque an event as the accession of Cæsar to the Papacy, but the next best thing happened: another Renaissance Pope was elected, Julius the Second—a warrior-Pope who entered Merandola sword in hand, and gave Rome back to the paganism of

Michael Angelo, Raphael, Del Sarto, Leonardo da Vinci, and Donatello.

These five great artists lived contemporaneously, and in a city called Florence, at that time not much bigger than Rathmines, every one of them as pagan as Cæsar himself in their lives, and as Phidias in their art. Were Tonks here he would at once interrupt me, for he paints anecdotes; and, very anxious to defend his principles, he would say, 'Explain yourself,' and if I know him, he would ask why the art of Michael Angelo is as pagan as that of Phidias. My answer would be that *The Last Judgment* is not an anecdote, but merely a pretext for drawing, and that Michael Angelo chose it for the same reason as Phidias chose *Olympus*—because it gave him an opportunity of exhibiting man in all his attributes and perfections. In *The Holy Family* Raphael discovered a like opportunity; and to make the Fornarina seem more beautiful he placed a child in her arms and another against her knees. Leonardo was not less a pagan than Raphael; it was pagan mysticism that inspired *Our Lady of the Rocks* and *St. Anne;* and these pictures would certainly have been admired by the Apostate. 'Thou hast not conquered, Galilean,' he would have cried out when he raised his eyes to the great temple that Michael Angelo was building for the glory of a Roman Emperor. He would have believed in Tetzel who went along the road shaking his money-box, crying 'As your money falls into my till your soul will jump out of Hell;' for he attached great importance to medals and amulets; but on meeting Luther he would have said, 'Why, this is Christianity over

again; St. Paul re-arisen.' Julian hated St. Paul and wrote confuting his doctrines, and he would have written against Luther who, ever since his visit to Rome, had been translating the Scriptures and praying that grace might be given to Rome to regain her lost Christianity—the very Christianity that Julian had striven against in the fourth century, a democratic Christianity, without a hierarchy, without external forms, in the heart, dear to Luther whose teaching was that, since Christ died on the Cross to save our souls, and left a Gospel for our guidance, it may be assumed that he left one that could be comprehended by everybody, otherwise he had died in vain. And everybody wondered why he had not understood before that Christianity is a personal thing given into every man's own keeping, whereby he may save his own soul or lose it. 'The priest comes between me and Christ,' was the universal cry in North Germany; England followed Germany, and the spirit of the Reformation swept through Sweden, Norway, Holland. France, the eldest daughter of the Church, nearly went over to Protestantism, Henry IV. declaring that he would become a Catholic for the sake of Paris. The Papacy was in tragic times, two-thirds of Europe had slipped away from her, and to save the third that remained a Council assembled at Trent.

The shell has been cracked, and we are at the kernel of the argument, that hitherto everybody had gone his own way and thought very much as he pleased; but at Trent the Church drew a circle about faith and morals, forbidding speculation on the meaning of life and the conduct of life, and arranging

the Catholic's journey from the cradle to the grave as carefully as any tour planned by that excellent firm, Messrs. Cook and Sons. He who puts himself in the hands of this firm does not waste time inquiring out the departure and the arrival of trains and steamboats. Edward knows that if he goes to confession his sins will be forgiven him; that if he misses Mass he is guilty of mortal sin; that if he loses his temper of venial sin. If he didn't believe these things he wouldn't be a Catholic. So there we are, and all this is as simple as Columbus's egg, but how strange that nobody should have seen before that Catholicism is an intellectual desert!

XII

In Mayo, almost in my own parish, was fought the most famous battle in Irish legend; from Mayo came Davitt, the Land League, and now a discovery which will recreate Ireland. The shepherds will fight hard, but the sword I found in my garden will prevail against the crozier, and by degrees the parish priest will pass away, like his ancestor the Druid.

I remembered the absurd review the *Times* published about the *Descent of Man*, and Matthew Arnold's fine phrase about the difficulty of persuading men to rise out of the unclean straw of their intellectual habits—his very words, no doubt—and his wisest, for the human mind declines if not turned out occasionally; mental, like bodily, cleanliness, is a habit; and when Papists have been persuaded to bring up their children Protestants the next genera-

tion may cross over to the agnostic end of the quadrille. My co-religionists will not like to hear me say it, but I will say it all the same: Protestantism is but a stage in the human journey; and man will continue to follow his natural evolution despite the endless solemnity of Wolfgang Goethe, who captured the admiration of all the pundits when he said that it would have been better if Luther had never been born, meaning thereby that Luther saved perishing Christianity. Arnold, who is nearly as pompous and more vindictive than Goethe, saw that man likes to bide like a pig in a stye. But enough of Arnold; I must not lead my readers into thinking that a single striking phrase is sufficient condonation for his very Rugby prose, epitomised in that absurd line about seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, a line that led one generation gaping into the wilderness, John Eglinton heading it. . . . To John I shall have to go presently, but I shall have to tell Æ the great news first. To-day is Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—on Saturday night!

And on Saturday night I was out on my doorstep, looking down the street to see if Æ were coming, trying to discover his appearance in that of every distant passer-by. He did not come, and dinner dragged itself slowly through its three courses, and vowing that I didn't care a brass farthing whether he came or stayed, I got up from table and pitched myself into an arm-chair. All the same I was glad to hear his knock about nine. He came in sweeping a great mass of hair from his forehead and telling me that he had had to go to Foxrock to meet some man from Germany who had written a book

about economics, and, having discussed rural banks all the afternoon, he was ready to talk to me about impressionist painting till midnight, and to read me an article which would have interested me if I had not been already absorbed by my idea.

'Æ, I've made a discovery that will revolutionize Ireland.'

It seemed to me that he should start up from his chair and wave his hands; but he continued smoking his old pipe, looking at me from time to time, till, at last, there was nothing else for me to do but to throw myself upon his mercy, asking him if it weren't very wonderful that nobody had noticed the fact that dogma and literature were incompatible. He seemed to think that everybody knew that this was so; and is there anything more discouraging than to find one's daring definitions accepted as commonplace truths?

'Then, my dear Æ, you've been extraordinarily remiss. You should have gone down and preached in Bray, taking for your text, "Dogma corrodes the intelligence." You weren't stoned when you preached that——'

'The Catholics will not admit their intellectual inferiority.'

'But if the history of the world proves it?'

'All the same——'

'When I say no Catholic literature, of course I mean that ninety and five per cent. of the world's literature was written by Protestants and agnostics.'

'Even so,' Æ answered, 'Catholics will continue to bring up their children in a faith that hasn't produced a book worth reading since the Reformation.'

'Well, what's to be done?'

Æ was dry, very dry. The German economist seemed to have taken all the sting out of him, and I began to see that in this new adventure he would be of little use to me. Rolleston has read every literature, but he had retired to Wicklow, his family having outgrown the house on Pembroke Road, and it was reported that he now was more interested in sheep than in books. Besides, he is a Protestant, and it would be more enlightening to hear a Catholic on the subject of my great discovery. A Catholic would have to put up some sort of defence, unless, indeed, he entrenched himself in theology, saying that it was no part of the business of Catholicism to consider whether dogma tended to encourage or repress literary activities. To this defence, the true one, I should have no answer.

'Gill is my man,' I said, as I got out of bed on Monday morning. 'He was educated at Trinity, and has lived in France. It will no doubt be disagreeable to him to listen to my proofs one after the other, but my business to-day is not to take Gill out for a pleasant walk, but to find out what defence an educated Catholic can put up.'

'Hullo, my dear Moore!' Gill said, raising his eyes from his writing-table.

'I've come to take you for a walk, Gill.'

'I'll be ready in a few minutes.'

And I watched my friend, who closed one eye curiously as he signed his letters, his secretary standing over him, handing them to him, one after the other, and answering questions until one of his lecturers came in, a man called Fletcher. Then he and Gill

talked away, each taking pleasure, so it seemed to me, in answering the other emptily as echoes do down a mountain-side, until at last I had to beg Fletcher to desist, and getting Gill his hat, I persuaded him out of the office down the stairs. Even when we were in the street he was undecided whether we should go along the square, wandering down Grafton Street, or whether we should treat ourselves to the Pembroke Road. 'The hawthorns are in flower and thrushes are singing there.' Gill agreed and we tripped along together, Gill yawning in the midst of his enjoyment, as is his wont—delightful little yawns. We yawn like dogs, a sudden gape and all is over; but Gill yawns like a cat, and a cat yawns as he eats, with *gourmandise*. We can read a cat's yawn in his eyes long before it appears in his jaws. Tom settles himself and waits for the yawn, enjoying it in anticipation. His sensuality is expressed in his yawn; his moustaches go up just like a cat's. His yawn is one of the sights of our town, and is on exhibition constantly at the Abbey Theatre. We do not go to the Abbey Theatre to watch it, but we watch it when we are at the Abbey, and we enjoy it oftener during a bad play than we do during a good one—*The Play Boy* distracts our attention from it, but when *Deirdre* is performed his yawns while our tedium away. His yawn is what is most real, most essential in him; it is himself; it inspires him; and out of his yawn wisdom comes. (Does this theory regarding the source of his wisdom conflict with an earlier theory?) He yawns in the middle of his own speeches, oftener, so I am assured, than any one of his auditors. He has

been seen yawning in chapel, and it is said that he yawns even in those intimate moments of existence when—— but I will not labour the point; we can have no exact knowledge on this subject whether or no Gill yawns when he—— we will dismiss all the stories that have collected about these yawns as apocryphal, restricting our account to those yawns that happen—well, in our faces.

Gill and I leaned over Baggot Street Bridge, watching the canal-boat rising up in the lock, the opening of the gates to allow the boat to go through, and the hitching on of the rope to the cross-bar. The browsing horse, roused by a cry, stuck his toes into the towing-path, and the strain began again all the way to the next lock, the boy flourishing a leafy bough, just pulled from the hedge. We continued our interrupted walk, glad that we had not been born canal-horses, Gill's step as airy as his thoughts, and, as we walked under flowering boughs, he began to talk to me about my volume of peasant stories. I was glad he did, for I had just found another translator, an Irish speaker, a Kerry man, and reckoned on this piece of news to interest him. But as soon as I mentioned that my friend was a Protestant and was going to take Orders, Gill spoke of 'Soupers,' and on my asking him his reason for doing so, he said a man with so Irish a name and coming from so catholic a part of the country, could not have come from any but catholic stock.

It has always seemed to me that if a man may modify his political attitude as Gill had done, the right to modify his spiritual can hardly be denied. But among Catholics the 'vert' is regarded with

detestation.. With them religion is looked upon as a family inheritance, even more than politics. 'A damned irreligious lot,' I thought, but did not speak my thought, for I wished the subject, 'Dogma or Literature,' to arise naturally out of the conversation; I did not attempt to guide it, but just dropped a remark that even if the man in question came of catholic stock and had separated himself from Roman formula for worldly reasons, it did not seem to me that we should blame him, life being what it is, a tangle of motives. But it is difficult to stint oneself, and I was soon asking Gill for what reason would he have a man change his religion if pecuniary and sexual motives were excluded?

'No man "verts" for theological,' I said; 'no man ever did so foolish a thing, except Newman, who wasted a good deal of time rummaging in the sayings of the Fathers of the fourth century, as if what they said mattered a jot to anybody. All conversions can be traced to sex, or to money, or hysteria, or the desire of rule and formula. I never thought of it before, but it would seem that Newman is the solitary example of a man changing his religion for theological reasons. I am speaking of modern time. Do you know another?'

Gill spoke of Manning, and his case was discussed for some time, myself maintaining that Manning was a Protestant of Protestants, liking Quakers far better than Catholics, but believing that the Roman Church might become a great political influence. We discussed all the reasons used for 'verting' during this walk. 'All, Gill,' I said, 'except one—a new reason has just occurred to me—literature.'

'Rome was always the patron of the arts.'

'Pagan Rome, yes. Alexander the Sixth saved the world from a revival of the Middle Ages by burning that disagreeable monk, Savonarola; and Julius saved the Renaissance, but, since the Council of Trent Rome has lost her paganism, especially in Ireland. I don't think that Irish Catholics have written much. I'm not sure that Catholics in any country have written much . . . an odd book here and there. You must admit, Gill, that this is an extraordinary fact, if it be a fact, and will have to be explained, accounted for.'

Gill laughed a little recklessly and contented himself with saying, 'Yes, it is very extraordinary . . . if it be a fact.'

'But, Gill, why not consider this question in our walk?'

'I would sooner that the defence of Catholicism were taken by one more capable than myself.'

'Who would you care to see undertake the task if not yourself?' He spoke of Father Tom Finlay. 'But it was Father Tom that set me thinking on this very subject, for when I said that Irish Catholics had written very little, he concurred, saying that Maynooth, with all its education, had not produced even a theological work—his very words.'

'Did he say that?' Gill asked, with the interest that all Catholics take in every word that comes from their priests.

'But I would sooner hear what you, a layman, have to say.'

Flattered by the invitation, Gill's somewhat meagre mind began to put forth long weedy sentences, and

from these I gathered that I was possibly right in saying that the Church had defined her doctrines at the Council of Trent, and therefore it might be said that the catholic mind was not as free in the twentieth century as it was in the Middle Ages.

'All the same, the great period of French literature came after the Reformation.'

'You know French literature as well as I do, Gill, and we'll just run through it. French literature in the sixteenth century is represented by Descartes, Rabelais, and Montaigne, all three agnostics. In the seventeenth century French literature in the Court of Louis Quatorze, which you look upon as the Golden Age, began with Corneille and Racine, and both these writers were Catholics, and for all I know to the contrary, excellent Catholics. But the tragedies of Corneille and Racine do not affect the question; they are but imitations of Greek drama, and do not attempt any criticism of life and the conduct of life.' Gill asked why not. 'Because their heroes and heroines were not Christians, and therefore their ideas could not come under the ban of the Church.'

'Fénelon?'

'A gentle light suited to weak eyes, but remember always that my contention is not that no Catholic ever wrote a book, but that ninety-five per cent. of the world's literature is written by agnostics and Protestants.'

'Bossuet?'

'A very elaborate and erudite rhetorician, whom Louis XIV. employed to unite all the Protestant sects in one Gallican Church. He set himself to

this task, but before it was finished Louis XIV. had settled his differences with the Pope.

'The beauty of Pascal's writing you will not deny, and his Catholicism——'

'Is more than doubtful, Gill. The Port Royal School has always been suspected of Protestantism, and you will not deny that Pascal's repudiation of the Sacraments justified the suspicion. *Naturellement même cela vous fera croire et vous abêtira.* A difficult phrase to translate, Gill; the best that I can do at this moment is "Sacraments help you to believe, but they stupefy you." But you know French as well as I do.'

Gill protested against my interpretation.

'Then why was the phrase suppressed in the Port Royal edition by the Jesuits? Cousin restored it after referring to the original manuscript. Now, in the eighteenth century we have Voltaire, the deist, the arch-mocker, the real *briseur de fers;* Rousseau, a Protestant, whose writings it is said brought about the French Revolution; Diderot and Montesquieu. The nineteenth century in France was all agnostic.'

'Chateaubriand!'

'You can have him and welcome, for through him we shall escape the danger of proving too much, but——'

'But what?'

'I was thinking of his name which is very like him. 'Pon my word, Gill, our names are our souls. A most suitable name for the author of *Le Génie du Christianisme,* a name to be incised on the sepulchre at St. Malo among the rocks out at sea, but he ordered that none should be put upon the slab; a

name for an ambassador, a diplomatist, a religious reformer, but not one for a poet, an artist, a pompous ridiculous name, a soft, unreal name, a grandiose name, a windy name, a spongy name, spongy as a *brioche*—Chateaubrioche, Gill, what do you think of it? Doesn't it hit him off? Chateaubrioche!'

And looking into Gill's face I read a gentle distress.

'His books were a means to an end instead of being an end in themselves. To criticize him in a phrase that he would have appreciated, I might say, *Je ne trouve dans ses œuvres que la vapeur et le tumulte.*'

'Whatever you may think of his writings, you cannot deny his Catholicism, and one of these days when I'm feeling less tired——'

'He wrote *Le Génie du Christianisme* in his mistress's house, reading her a chapter every night before they went to bed. It is true that Catholics must have mistresses, as well as Protestants, but you are an Irish Catholic and would be loath to admit as much. Chateaubriand was content to regret *Atala*, but Edward burnt his early poems. Verlaine was a Catholic and he was a great poet, there is no question about that, Gill. You see I am dealing fairly with you, but like Chateaubriand, Verlaine's Catholicism *ne l'a nullement gêné dans sa vie.* He wrote the most beautiful poems in the French language, some were pious, some were indecent, and he spaced them out in *Parallelement.* He did not look upon Catholicism as a means of government, he just liked the Liturgy; Mary and the saints were pleasing to him in stained glass, and when he came out of prison he was repentant and wrote *Sagesse.* Paul Verlaine! Since

the Elizabethan days, was a poet ever dowered with a more beautiful name? And his verses correspond to his name. "*Où donc est l'âme de Verlaine?*" What a beautiful refrain for a ballad! What shall we say about the Catholicism of my old friend Huysmanns? Out of hatred of the Voltairean grocer he plunged into magic. The more ridiculous the miracle the more he believed in it; and the French ecclesiastics would be sorry to have about them many Catholics like him. Upon my word, Gill, my theory that Catholicism hasn't produced a readable book since the Reformation stands on more legs than four.'

Some carts were passing at the time, and when the rattle of their wheels died down, I asked Gill what he thought of my discovery, but, detecting or seeming to detect a certain petulance in his voice, I interrupted:

'But, Gill, I don't see why the discussion should annoy you. It isn't as if I were asking you to reconsider your position regarding the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, of Transubstantiation and the Pope's Infallibility. So far as I know there is no dogma declaring that Catholics are not intellectually inferior to Protestants and Agnostics. Your religion leaves you quite free to accept my theory; indeed, I think it encourages you to do so, for does not Catholicism always prefer the obedient and the poor in spirit to the courageous, the learned, and the wise?' And I spoke of the *Imitation of Christ* till Gill became so petulant that I thought it would be well to desist, and began to speak instead on one of his favourite subjects—compromise. At once he held forth. disclaiming the idealogues of the

French Revolution, who would re-make the world according to their idea, without regard to the facts of human nature, and then, as if pre-occupied by his intellectual relationship with Machiavelli, Gill entered upon a discussion regarding the duties of a statesman, saying that all great reforms had been effected by compromise, and it was by her genius for compromise that England had built up the Empire; and he continued in this strain until at last it was impossible for me to resist the temptation to ask him to explain to me the difference between trimming and compromise, which he did very well, inflicting defeat upon me. The trimmer, he said, compromises for his own advantage, irrespective of the welfare of the State, but the statesman who compromises is influenced by his sympathy for the needs of humanity, which cannot be changed too quickly.

And this, the lag end of our argument, carried us pleasantly back over Baggot Street Bridge, but at the corner of Herbert Street, the street in which Gill lives, I could not resist a Parthian shot.

'But, Gill, if compromise be so essential in human affairs, is it not a pity that the Irish haven't followed the example of the English? Especially in religion,' I said.

As Gill did not answer me at once I followed him to the door of his house.

'It can't be denied that Protestantism is a compromise?' This Gill had to admit. 'But it is not one,' I said, 'that you are likely to accept.' He laughed and I returned to Ely Place, pleased by the rickety lodging-house appearance of Baggot Street against the evening sky, and, for the moment forget-

ful of the incompatibility of dogma and literature, my thoughts melted into a meditation, the subject of which was that the sun sets nowhere so beautifully as it does at the end of Baggot Street.

The clocks had not yet struck seven, and, as I did not dine till half-past, I turned into Stephen's Green and followed the sleek borders of the brimming lake, admiring the willow-trees in their first greenness and their reflections in the tranquil water. The old eighteenth-century brick was beautiful in the warm glow of the sunset; and the slender balconies and the wide flights of steps seemed conscious that they had fallen into evil modern days; and horrified at the sight of a shop that had been run up at the corner of the Green, I cried, 'Other shops will follow it, and this beautiful city of Dublin will become in very few years as garish as London. To keep Dublin it might be well to allow it to slumber in its Catholicism wherein nothing alters. These Catholics,' I said, 'are strangely pathetic. How they love the darkness, and cry against me because I would throw the shutters open and bring light into the room.'

My talk with Gill, which had already become a memory, rose up before me. 'He isn't a stupid man,' I said, 'but why does his intelligence differ from mine and from the intelligence of every Protestant and Agnostic? We are different. Catholics lack initiative, I suppose that that is it. The catholic mind loses its edge quickly. Sex sharpens it for a little while, but when the Catholic marries and settles down he very soon becomes like an old carving-knife. The two whetstones are sex and

religious discussion, and we must keep passing our intelligences up one and down the other. After fifty sex dies, and religious discussion becomes more than ever essential. I have heard a man say, 'One can't go on considering the problems of life and death always, one just accepts, and by accepting gets free for other things.' But that is the Catholic's mistake; theology is the whetstone, and Scotchmen know it,' and the story of the Scotchman who was heard at the railway-station crying to his departing friend, 'I give you James but I take my stand on Timothy,' came into my head, and I muttered, 'Quite true; we become rusted, broken blades, or empty scabbards for a child to ride a cock-horse upon.'

The ducks climbed out of the water. And the gulls? There was not one in the air nor on the water; and, after wondering a while if they had returned to the sea, I decided for good and all that I owed the preservation of my own intelligence to my theological interests. Some readers may prefer, or think they prefer, my earlier books, but none will deny that my intelligence has sharpened, whereas Gill's—— 'My cook will grumble if I keep dinner waiting,' and I returned to Ely Place to eat, and to meditate on the effect of dogma on literature.

XIII

The great French writers of the nineteenth century were Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Balzac, Gautier, Michelet, Renan, Taine, Saint-Beuve, Gerard de Nerval, Merimée, Les Goncourts, Georges Sand,

Flaubert, Zola, Maupassant, and all these were Agnostics; Guizot was a Protestant, his historical works have I suppose some value; John Eglinton will tell me about him, and glad of an excuse for a visit to the National Library, I went forth after dinner to talk literature again, arriving in Kildare Street about half-past nine, when John Eglinton was writing the last of those mysterious slips of paper, cataloguing, I think he calls it. A visitor is welcome after half-past nine, and in the sizzle of electric light we debate till ten. Then he comes back to smoke a cigar with me or I go home with him. He lacks the long, clear vision of Æ, but when an idea is brought close to him he appreciates it shrewdly, and it is the surety that he will understand, a little later, my idea better than I understand it myself, that makes his first embarrassment so attractive to me.

In the evening I am about to relate I found him a little more short-sighted than usual; his little face wrinkled up as he sought to grasp, to understand my discovery that Catholics had not produced a book worth reading since the Reformation, for John Eglinton only understands his own thoughts, and it is with difficulty that he is rolled out of them.

'You mean that all English literature has been produced in the Protestant tradition, but I'm afraid that Protestants will think this is a somewhat too obvious truth. Of course, we all know that Chaucer is the only English Catholic poet——'

'My dear John Eglinton, you've not understood!' A worried look came into his face, and in his desire to understand he seemed like getting cross with

me. 'My belief is that catholic countries haven't produced a book.'

John gasped.

'But France?'

We went into that question, and were talking of Pascal when the attendant came in to ask John for the keys; it was three minutes to ten.

'Shall I ring the bell, sir?'

John agreed that the bell might be rung, and we watched the odd mixture of men and women leave their books on the counter and go through the turnstiles. John had to wait till the last left, and the last was a little old gentleman about five feet high who has come to the library every night for the last thirty years to read Dickens and nothing but Dickens. He passed through the turnstile; we followed him; the fireman was consulted; and when all the lights were out John was free to go for a walk with me, and I think it was in Baggot Street that I succeeded in bringing home to him the importance of my discovery.

'But Spain?' he interjected. '*Don Quixote*?'

'Spanish literature is contemporaneous with the Council of Trent when the Church defined her dogmas, and——'

'And *Don Quixote* is as unethical,' he said, 'as *David Copperfield*.'

'Whatever merit *Lope de Vega* may have had in his day, he has none now;' and we discussed for a while the interesting question whether the merits of books are permanent or temporary. 'Byron's poetry conquered Europe, and to-day everybody knows it to be illiterate doggerel; and in our understanding

Calderon's plays are merely rows of little wooden figures moved hither and thither by a mind that seems gracious despite his conviction that the Inquisition was a kind and beneficent institution. All the same Shelley and Goethe admired Calderon; Shelley translated some pages,' and John Eglinton agreed with me that these are the only pages of Shelley that we cannot read. He spoke of St. Patrick's Purgatory.

'It passes beyond perception,' and he laughed steadily.

'Calderon, in spite of his piety, didn't succeed in avoiding heresy, for in ecclesiastic zeal he seems to have identified himself with Antinomianism. Perhaps he was condemned. You quite understand that my point isn't that a Catholic hasn't written a book since the Reformation, but that ninety and nine per cent., well, ninety and five per cent. of the literature of the world has been produced by Protestants and Agnostics.'

'I see what you mean now,' and the dear little man of the puckered face listened on his doorstep to an exhortation to write a little more of that beautiful English which he so wastefully spends in his conversation. He listened, but unwillingly; he does not like my literary exhortations, and I pondered on his future as I walked home. 'He will sink deeper and deeper into his arm-chair, and into his own thoughts.'

The closing of the public-houses told me that it must be near eleven and the thought of dear Edward sitting behind his screen, smoking, led me to Leinster Street. The Sword Motive brought

the candle-light glimmering down the stairs; the door opened, and two old cronies went upstairs to talk once more of painting and literature—two old cronies who had known each other in boyhood, who had talked all through our lives on the same subjects, Edward feeling things perhaps a little deeper than I have ever done. When the *Master Builder* is played he walks from the theatre into the Green, and sits under the hawthorns in some secluded spot, his eyes filled with tears at the memory, as he would say it himself, of so much beauty. Was it Yeats described him as 'the sketch of a great man' —the sketch, he said; *l'ébauche* better realises his idea of dear Edward; but Yeats does not know French; and while my eyes followed Edward about the room I wondered if it would be wise for me to exchange, were it possible, a wine-glass of intelligence for a rummer of temperament. . . . We have gone through life together, myself charging windmills, Edward holding up his hands in amazement.

'More culture and less common sense than the Spanish original,' I said, and I watched him moving ponderously about his ungainly room, so like himself. There is something eternal about Edward, an entity come down through the ages, and myself another entity. 'Reciprocating entities,' I said, glancing at some pictures of famous churches. (Edward pins photographic reproductions on the dusty wall-paper.) A beautiful church caught my eye, and, desiring Edward's criticism of it, as one desires an old familiar tune, I asked him if the church were an ancient or a modern one; and, answering that it was one of Pugin's churches, he lifted his glasses up on

his nose and peered into the photograph, absorbed for some moments by the beauty which he perceived in it.

The church set us talking of Pugin's genius, and whether the world would ever invent a new form of architecture, or whether the age of architecture was over and done like the Stone and the Bronze Ages. Edward's churchwarden was now drawing famously, his glass of grog was by his side, and the nights in the Temple, when he used to tell me that he would like to write his plays in Irish, rose up before me. 'All his prejudices are the same,' I said, 'more intense, perhaps; he is a little older, a little more liable to catch cold,' and he spoke to me of the necessity of a screen to protect him from the draught coming under the door.

'Have a cigar.' He pushed the box towards me and continued to smoke his pipe.

Although not a priest, there is something hierarchic about him, and I thought of Ancient Egypt and then of our friendship. It was drawing to a close mysteriously as a long summer evening. 'We shall not see much of each other at the end of our lives,' I said, wondering how the separation was going to come about, not liking to tell him of my great discovery, fearing to pain him.

'You're very silent to-night, George,' he jerked out, breaking the silence at last. 'Of what are you thinking?'

'Of a great discovery——'

'What, another! I thought you had come to the end of them. Your first was the naturalistic novel, your second impressionistic painting——'

'My third was your plays, Edward, and the Irish Renaissance, which is but a bubble.'

'Oh, it's only a bubble,' he said, his jolly great purple face shaking like a jelly.

'You may laugh,' I said, 'but it is no laughing matter for the Catholic Church if it can be shown that no Catholic has written a book since the Reformation. . . . I wish you wouldn't laugh like that.'

At the end of the next fit of laughter he bit a piece off the end of his churchwarden, and, getting up from the sofa, he searched for another along the chimneypiece, and when he had filled it, he said to me, who had been sitting quite silent:

'Now, tell me about this new mare's-nest.'

'I've told you already. There has been no Catholic literature since the Reformation, and very little before it. Boccaccio and Ariosto were pagans, Michael Angelo and Raphael——'

'But Michael Angelo painted *The Last Judgment* and Raphael *The Holy Family*.'

We talked for an hour and, his brain clearing suddenly, he said: 'Raphael and Michael Angelo lived in a catholic country, came of catholic inheritance, and painted christian subjects.'

'And you don't care to inquire further into the matter. How very catholic!'

'But what has all this got to do with the Irish Renaissance?'

'Only this, Edward: of what use is it to change the language of Ireland since Catholics cannot write? Unless some special indulgences are granted for prayers in Irish. Of course, if so——'

I know all about that;' and Edward puffed sullenly at his pipe. 'So your great discovery is that the Irish Renaissance is nothing but a bubble. What about your mission?'

'Good God! I hadn't thought of that,' I said. And, getting out of my chair, I walked up and down the room, overcome.

'What are you thinking of?' Edward asked at the end of a long silence.

'Of what am I thinking? Of what you said just now.'

'What did I say?'

'You reminded me of my mission. Great God, Edward!'

'I wish you wouldn't take the Sacred Name in vain.'

'My life has been sacrificed for a bubble.'

'But you knew Ireland was a catholic country.'

'I was bidden here. If some nun said she had seen a troop of angels and the Virgin Mary, you would believe it all, but when I tell you that on the road to Chelsea——'

Seeing that I was profoundly moved, Edward ceased laughing, and began to speak of Newman.

'Newman was a convert,' I said, 'and he brought some of the original liberty of the Protestant into his Catholicism; isn't that so?'

Edward puffed at his pipe and seemed to think that perhaps the convert was not quite so obedient as the born catholic.

'It's a very serious thing for me,' I said, rising. 'I suppose I must be getting home.'

He lit the candle and took me downstairs, and at the grating which guards the tobacconist's door I said:

'I haven't examined the question thoroughly. I may discover some Catholic writers. Do you know of any?'

Edward said he could not say offhand, and I crossed the tram-line, thinking how I had been ensnared, and wondering who was the snarer.

XIV

Edward had mentioned Lingard, my earliest literary acquaintance; some volumes of his *History of England* had been brought down from my grandfather's library about fifty years ago, and Miss Westby had striven to teach me reading and history out of them. Now, Lingard was a Catholic, and Pascal, too, in spite of his many doubts. His thoughts (*Les Pensées*) were written in the hope that doubts might be reasoned away; it must have been in a moment of irritation that he scribbled that sacraments stupefy the recipient, for in the celebrated dialogue the believer escapes from the dilemma into which the unbeliever is pressing him by offering to make the matter between them the subject of a bet. The Kingdom of Earth is such a poor pleasure-ground that the believer decides to put his money on the Kingdom of Heaven; 'even if it should prove mythical my plight will not be worse than thine,' he says; 'and if it should turn out a reality—how much better!'

When I was halfway up Merrion Square I caught myself considering the word 'belief'—the vainest word in the language, and the cause of all our

misunderstandings, for nobody knows what he believes or disbelieves. We attach ourselves to certain ideas and detach ourselves from others; so runs the world away; and it was by the gateway in Ely Place that I remembered Saint-Simon and La Bruyère, two fine writers, and both of them Catholics. La Fontaine reached literary perfection in his *Fables*, but he could not have been interested in bird-life, else he would not have written of the reed bending beneath the weight of the wren. The image is charming, but wrens do not live among reeds. Was it the rhyme that lured him—*roseau* and *fardeau?* The rhyme never lured Shelley into mistakes about the habits of birds or flowers. But in the seventeenth century there was little love of Nature. However, it is with La Fontaine's Catholicism and not his ornithology that I am concerned He wrote some improper stories. Fénelon, the author of *Télémaque*, (fie upon it!) was a very poor writer, but he seems to have been an amiable gentleman, and we like to think of him, and hate to think of Bossuet, that detestable man, who persecuted Madame de Genlis and wrote a very artificial style. I cannot think of any other writers, but all the same, the seventeenth century shows up far better than I thought for. The eighteenth is, of course, Agnostic from end to end, unless we count Chateaubriand as an eighteenth-century writer, and we may, for he was born about 1760, and lived a long way into the nineteenth, dying at the end of the thirties . . . he may have lived right into the forties. Montalembert remained a staunch Catholic in spite of the 'Infallibility,'

declared about that time; and there were some Abbés who did not write badly, one Lamennais, whose writings got him into trouble with Rome.

English literature is, of course, Protestant—back, belly, and sides. . . . Chaucer was pre-Reformation; Crashaw and Dryden returned to Catholicism; Pope seems to have called himself a Catholic, but his *Essay on Man* proves him to be an Agnostic. In the beginning of the nineteenth century there were a good many conversions, and some writers should be found among them. Newman! Arthur Symons mentioned him in the *Saturday Review* as having a style, so I suppose he must have one. 'I must read his *Apologia*, for Symons may have taken him on trust.' Among the present-day writers are W. S. Lilly and Hilaire Belloc, professional Catholics, always ready to argue that the English decadence began with the suppression of the monasteries. Hilarious regards the sixteenth century as altogether blameworthy, from an artistic point of view, I suppose, for in one of his polemics he declared himself to be no theologian, a strange admission from a professional Catholic, ranking him in my eyes with the veterinary surgeon who admits that he knows nothing about spavins. W. S. Lilly is more thoroughly interpenetrated with Catholic doctrine; his articles in the *Fortnightly* are harder, weightier, denser; he reads *Aquinas* every day, and dear Edward looks upon him as an admirable defender of the faith. Of late years the shepherds have taken up novel-writing, hoping, no doubt, to beguile their flocks away from the dangerous bowers of the lady-novelists, the beds of rose-leaves, the

tiger-skins, and the other lustful displays and temptations. Amiable and educated gentlemen, every one of them, no doubt, but without any faintest literary gift. They would do better to return to their slums, where work suitable to their heads and hands awaits them.

I turned over in bed, and must have dozed a little while, for I suddenly found myself thinking of a tall sallow girl, with brown eyes and a receding chin, who used to show me her poems in manuscript ages ago. I thought them very beautiful at the time, and of this early appreciation I need not be ashamed, for the poems have lived a pleasant modest life ever since in a slight volume tediously illustrated, entitled *Preludes*. Unfortunately these poems preluded nothing but a great deal of catholic journalism, a catholic husband who once read me a chaplet of sixty sonnets which he had written to his wife, and a numerous catholic progeny who have published their love of God in a volume entitled *Eyes of Youth*, which I might never have seen had not the title been mentioned one day by a friend who, fearing my sacrilegious mind, refused to lend me the book. But moved by a remembrance of Alice Meynell, I sent immediately for a copy.

And it came to me some hours later, brought by a messenger, a slim grey volume of poems, with an introduction by G. K. Chesterton; an able journalist, it is true, but that is hardly a reason for asking him to introduce a number of young catholic writers to Protestant readers . . . unless he has gone over to Rome. He could not have done that without reading the Fathers; and he could not have read them without their influencing his style. It rollicks down

Fleet Street as pleasantly as ever, and we are there in the first lines, when he writes that all 'serious critics class Francis Thompson with Shelley and Keats.' A critic may be learned, ignorant, discriminating, dense, subtle, venial, honest, and a hundred other things, but serious seems just the one adjective that Mr. Chesterton should have avoided. He must have been thinking with the surface of his brain when he compared Francis Thompson with Shelley; casual thinking always puts wrong words into our heads; a thoughtful critic would have 'classed' Thompson with Crashaw; *un fond de Crashaw avec une garniture de Shelley* is a definition of Francis Thompson which I put forward, hoping that it may please somebody. Francis Thompson accepted Catholic dogma; it provided him with themes, whereupon he might exercise his art; he wrote for the sake of words, they were his all, and avoided piety, for piety is incompatible with a great wealth of poetic diction. He left piety to his poetic inferiors, to the sisters Meynell, Olivia and Viola, who seem to be drawn to verse-writing because it allows them to speak of Mary's knee, the blood-stained Cross, the Fold, the Shepherd, and the Lamb. They must have deplored Monica Saleeby's *Retrospect*, for it does not contain a single pious allusion, and welcomed her *Rebuke*, for in this poem Monica makes amends for her abstinence, and uses up all her sister's pious phrases, and adds to them. (I am assuming that Monica Saleeby was originally a Meynell, for her verse is so distinctly Meynell that one hardly believes it to be an imitation.) The volume concludes with the poems of Francis Meynell; but, though the name of God occurs six times in a poem of four stanzas, I

think he lacks the piety of his sisters; he does not produce the word with the admirable unction and sanctimonious grace of Maurice Healey, Ruth Lindsay, and Judith Lytton. Were Judith and Ruth like Monica originally Meynells, or are they merely of the school of Meynell? I have pondered their poems now for nearly an hour without being able to satisfy myself on this point. It was unwise for me to have ventured out on the stormy sea of attributions at all. Francis is a Meynell with a drop of Coventry Patmore, but the drop must have gone crossways in him, as we say in Ireland, for even when writing about the marriage-bed he cannot refrain from pietistic allusion:

> 'For when she dreams, who is beloved,
> The ancient miracle stands proved,—
> Virginity's much motherhood!
> For O the unborn babes she keeps,
> The unthought glory, lips unwooed.'

But I must be thinking of my readers, for not a doubt of it everyone of them is saying: 'Our author is wasting too much time on the examination of this volume. We will assume that the ladies go to confession once a week, and the gentlemen once a month. Get on with your story. Tell us, is there any Catholic literature in Scandinavia?'

My dear readers, Scandinavia seems to be entirely free from Catholic literature; and, looking from Ibsen and Björnson towards Russia, I am afraid that Tourguenéff, the most thoughtful of all tale-tellers, must be reckoned as an agnostic writer, and Tolstoy, for his lack of belief in the Resurrection, would have been denied Christian burial by St. Paul. Lermontov was

certainly an agnostic. My dear readers, it seems impossible to discover a Catholic writer of importance in Europe.

A voice cries in my ear, 'Have you looked into German literature?' and I answer back, 'I know nothing of German literature, but will call upon John Eglinton to-night. But John will only tell me that Goethe and Schiller were Protestants, and that Heine was a Jew. He may mention that the Schlegels turned Catholic in their old age. Perhaps Best will be able to tell me. He knows German literature.'

He is John's coadjutor in the National Library: a young man with beautiful shining hair and features so fine and delicate that many a young girl must have dreamed of him at her casement window, and would have loved him if he had not been so passionately interested in the affixed pronoun—one of the great difficulties of ancient Irish.

'Kuno Meyer will be here at the end of the month, and he'll be able to tell you all that you want to know about German literature.'

'You are quite right, Best. Meyer is my man; he'll understand at once.' Best is Kuno Meyer's favourite lamb, and Kuno Meyer is a great German scholar who comes over to Dublin from Liverpool occasionally to shepherd the little flock that browses about his Celtic erudition; and a pressing invitation was sent to him next day, asking him to spend a week or a fortnight with me. An invitation of a fortnight did not strike me as excessive. We had been friends for over a year, ever since the day he had come to a rehearsal of *The Tinker and the Fairy*, a delightful one-act play that Hyde had written for

the entertainment of a Gaelic assembly in my garden. He was prompting Hyde, who was not sure of his words, when I came into the room, and my surprise was great, for it is not usual to meet the Irish language in a light brown overcoat and a large, soft, brown hat; beards are uncommon among Gaelic speakers, and long, flowing moustaches unknown. A Gaelic Leaguer's eyes are not clear and quiet, and he does not speak with a smooth even voice; his mind is not a comfortable mind; and by these contraries, in defiance of Aristotle, I am describing Kuno Meyer, the great scholar artist, the pleasure of whose life it has been to disinter the literature of the ancient Celt, and to translate it so faithfully that when we read we seem to see those early times as in a mirror.

It would be a pleasure to me to write some pages on this subject, and I would write them now if the man did not stand before me as he was when I first saw him, a wreck with rheumatism, looking at me sideways, unable to move his neck, his hands and feet swollen. He must have suffered a good deal of pain, but it never showed itself in his face, and though he was well aware that his disease was progressive ossification, he did not complain of his hardship in being so strangely afflicted. At that time death did not seem to be very far away, but he did not fear death, and I admired his unruffled mind, often reminding me of a calm evening, and thought myself the most fortunate of men when he promised to stay at my house next time he came to Dublin. His intelligence and his learning were a great temptation, and during the long evenings we spent together my constant effort was to get him to talk

about himself. But he did not seem very much interested in the subject; certainly he does not see himself as a separate entity; and the facts that dribbled out were that he had come to England when he was seventeen, the first visit not being a long one. He had returned, however, two years later, and he thought that it had taken him about five years to learn English and to capture the spirit of the language. I seemed to get a better sight of him when he mentioned that he had been private tutor for two years, and I said to myself, 'A studious German, who, when not engaged with his pupils was preparing himself for a University career.' He must have told me how he became a Professor of Romantic languages at Queen's College, Liverpool, but he could not have made much of the story, else I should have remembered it. It was from Best that I learnt he was once an excellent cricketer, and though now crippled with rheumatism it was easy to see that he must have looked well on the cricket-field in white flannels and a blue belt, and he must have been a strong man, but never a fast runner, I am sure of that, therefore I place him at point. . . . I can see him there, the sleeves of his shirt turned up, revealing a sinewy brown arm.

But the cause of his illness, his affection? The cause may have been the Liverpool climate, or his disease may have been constitutional. Who shall trace the disease back to its furthest source? Not the specialists, certainly; for years they were consulted. 'What do you eat?' said the first. 'I often eat beef,' was Meyer's answer. 'Beef is poison to you; mutton as much as you like.'

Meyer did not touch beef again for three months, but the disease continued. He consulted another specialist. 'What do you eat? Mutton? Mutton is poison to you; beef as much as you like.' To be on the safe side Meyer ate neither one nor the other, but, notwithstanding his obedience to the different diets imposed upon him, his disease continued unabated. Another specialist was consulted. 'What do you drink? Claret? Claret is poison to you; whisky as much as you like.' With whisky for his daily drink his disease developed alarmingly; Meyer went abroad; he consulted French and German specialists; some gave him pills, some recommended champagne and Rhine wines; but his disease gained steadily, and at last the doctors contented themselves by advising him to avoid everything that he found disagreed with him, which was the best advice they could have given, for a man is often his own best doctor. Meyer's instincts prompted him to spend some months in a warm climate, and it was while travelling in Portugal that Meyer drank some champagne, feeling very depressed, and during a night of agony it occurred to him that perhaps alcohol was the bane. He determined to give abstinence from alcohol a trial, avoiding it in its every form, even light claret. The disease seemed to stop; and, speaking of his affliction to a fellow-traveller in the train from Lisbon to Oporto, he heard of some baths in Hungary.

'You have tried so many remedies that I don't dare to ask you to go there, but if you should ever find yourself in Hungary, you might try them.'

Meyer went to Hungary, hopeless; but he returned

convinced that if he had gone there some years earlier the treatment would have boiled all the stiffness out of his neck and shoulders; he had gone, however, soon enough to rid himself of the greater part of his affection, and to secure himself against any further advances.

'He will die like another, but not of ossification,' I muttered, as I paced the greensward, looking at every turn through the hawthorn boughs. 'Why, there he is!' and, banging the wicket, I ran across the street to let him in with my latchkey.

'Let me help you off with your overcoat,' I said, as soon as we were in the passage. 'You got my letter? How kind of you to come over so soon,' and my eyes dropped to the papers in his hand.

'Your letter was very welcome, for, to tell the truth, I've long wanted to come to Dublin.'

'And for why?' I asked sympathetically, wishing to divest Meyer of any faintest suspicion of an ulterior object behind the invitation that I had sent him.

'Well, in a way you are concerned in my desire to spend some time in Dublin. You have always taken a kindly and very appreciative interest in the ancient Irish poems which I have been fortunate enough to discover.'

'And to translate so exquisitely that you and Lang are our only translators,' I said, my eyes going back to the papers in his hand. 'When did you arrive?'

He admitted that he had been a couple of days in Dublin without finding time to come to see me, and I thought of Best, who is always frisking about Meyer, gathering up every scrap of his time, sometimes unjustifiably, as I thought in the present case,

for Best knew how necessary Meyer's learning was to me.

'And where are you staying?' I asked, keeping as far as possible any trace of annoyance out of my voice. The question seemed to embarrass Meyer for a moment, but he quickly recovered himself.

'As far back as three months ago I promised Best to stay with him, but my visit to Percy Place is now over, and when you are tired of me I'm going to take a lodging at Kingstown, so we shall see a good deal of each other.'

'You are on the track of something important,' I said. 'Do tell me about it. Have you discovered another Marban—another Laon and Curithir?'

Meyer smiled at my enthusiasm through his long moustache, and told me that he had spent the morning in Trinity College library and had come upon——

'Another Nature Poem?'

'No, but a very curious religious poem.' My face clouded. 'I think it will interest you. It throws a light on the life of those times, for the author, a monk, tells us that he left his monastery, which had become noisy, for he required perfect quiet for the composition of his poem, *God's Grandfather*.

'Whose grandfather?'

'*God's Grandfather*; that is the title of the poem.'

'I never knew God had a grandfather.'

'Mary had a mother; the Biblical narrative is silent regarding her parentage, but the early Greek writers were known to our author, and he read in Ephanius that Mary's mother, Anne, had had three husbands—Joachim, Cleophas, and Salomas, and that she had been brought to bed of a daughter by each

husband. Each daughter was called Mary, but only one Conception was Immaculate. By an Immaculate Conception he understood a conception outside of common sensuality, brought about by some spiritual longing into which obedience to the will of God entered largely.'

'How very curious! I wonder if the Meynells would have included the poem in their collection?'

Meyer became interested at once, but his interest slackened when he heard that their poems were modern, and a kindly smile began in his gold-brown moustache, and he said:

'A long family separating in the afternoon for the composition of pious poems.'

'Like your hermits,' I said; 'but the Catholicism of the desert is more interesting than the Catholicism of the suburbs. Let's get back to the thirteenth century.'

'His monastery was too noisy for the composition of *God's Grandfather*, and he retired into the wilderness to think out the circumstances of Mary's Immaculate Conception. And this is how he imagined it: Joachim, as he was driving his cattle home one evening, met some travellers who wished to purchase a bullock from him. He begged of them to choose an animal; they did so, asking Joachim to name a price. But instead of putting the money agreed upon into his hand the travellers poured several blessings on Joachim and told him to return home as quickly as he could. He was at first loath to go without his money, but the travellers told him he must accept the blessings they had poured over him in lieu of money, and on his asking

innocently what he was to do with the blessings, he was told that the use of the blessings would be revealed to him when he got home. And being a man of faith, he ran away with the blessings he had received clasped to his bosom; nor did he stop till he saw Anne, his wife. At the time she was gathersome brushwood to light the fire for their evening meal, and sure enough, as the travellers had told him, unexpected words were put into his mouth: "Anne, put down the sticks thou art gathering, and follow me into the inner room." She did his bidding, as a wife should do, and, as they lay face to face, Joachim showered upon her the blessings that the travellers had given him, and it was these blessings that caused the conception recognized as miraculous by Joachim, and afterwards by the Church.'

'And you have translated that poem?'

'I have made a rough translation of some stanzas,' and while he read them to me I marvelled at the realism of early Christianity.

'How different from our sloppy modern piety! In the poem you have just read to me, there isn't a single abstract term. Meyer, you are making wonderful literary discoveries, unearthing a buried civilization.'

The conversation dropped, and I could no longer resist the temptation to tell Meyer that I, too, was making discoveries. His cigar was only half-way through, and it was plain that the suave and lucid mind of Meyer was at my disposal. My argument had been repeated so often that it had become a little trite, and a suspicion intruded upon my mind as I hurried from St. Augustine, through Dante, Boccaccio,

and Ariosto, that my narrative had grown weary. Or was it that Meyer, being a professor, could not grasp at once that we must choose between literature and dogma? A perplexed look came into his face as I sketched out in broad lines the sixteenth and seventeenth century literature in France. As I was about to proceed northward through Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, Meyer asked questions which revealed the professor latent in him, and while answering him and trying to persuade him out of his professorial humours, I fell to thinking that perhaps he would enjoy himself better in a debate on the Shakespearean drama, or the debt that the dramatists of the Restoration owed to Molière. He would delight in satisfying our curiosity regarding the inevitable Mademoiselle de Scudéry, whose festoons and astragals are of course plainly to be descried in the works of Pope and Prior. So do we often criticize our friend and he sitting opposite to us, little thinking how he is being torn to pieces.

'You find that Catholicism draws men's thoughts away from this world, and that Catholic literature lacks healthy realism; but surely literature has nothing to do with theology?'

'Of course it hasn't, Meyer. I'm afraid I haven't succeeded in explaining myself. I must begin it all over again. St. Augustine . . . but perhaps it is not necessary to go over it all again. In the Middle Ages there was no literature, only some legends, and a good deal of theology. Why was this? Because if you plant an acorn in a vase the oak must burst the vase or become dwarfed. I can't put it plainer. Do you understand?'

'You spoke just now of the intense realism of the Irish poets.'

'The poem you read me was pre-Reformation.'

'It seems to me that if one outlet be closed to man's thought he will find another, and perhaps in a more concentrated and violent form. Even in Spain,' he said, 'where thought was stifled by such potent organizations as Church and State, we find man expressing himself daringly. Velasquez.'

'You mean the Venus in the National Gallery—that stupid thing for which the nation paid forty-five thousand pounds; the thighs and the back are very likely by Velasquez, but not the head nor the curtain nor the Cupid. But, Meyer, B.T.M.'s have never been actually condemned by the Church; they merely lead men to sin, and sin can be forgiven, and for the moment I am not interested in the fact that realistic painting throve in Spain when the Inquisition was most powerful.'

'Goethe speaks of free spirits;' and from that moment Meyer began to rouse himself.

'Of course the spirit must be free. And Germany, being divided equally between Catholics and Protestants——'

A troubled look came into Meyer's face. 'I fail to see how your theory can be settled one way or the other by German literature, but if you want me to tell you the names of the great German writers,' he answered in his most professorial manner, 'those that occur to me at the moment are Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, the Schlegels, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Jean Paul Richter, Herder, Lenan, and Nietzsche.'

'And all these were North German writers? None came from the South. Are there no Catholics among them, not one?'

'No,' he said, 'none. One of the Schlegels turned Catholic in his old age.'

'And did he write after he turned Catholic?'

'No; as well as I remember he wrote nothing afterwards.'

'Austria is a great country. Has it produced no Catholic writers?'

'None of any note,' Meyer answered. 'There was —' and he mentioned the names of two writers, and as they were unknown to me I asked him to tell me about them. 'Writers of fairy-tales,' he said 'of feeble novels—writers of the fifth and sixth and seventh rank. No one outside Austria knows their names.'

'Then,' I said, 'I'm done for.' Meyer raised his eyes.

'Done for?'

'I was led into this country in the hopes of reviving the language. It seemed to me that a new language was required to enwomb a new literature. I am done for. Ireland will not forego her superstitions for the sake of literature—accursed superstitions that have lowered her in intelligence and made her a slut among nations. It is very strange that you don't see that Dogma and Literature are incompatible. I suppose the idea is new to you.'

We talked for a little while longer, and then Meyer asked me if he might go to the writing-table and continue the translation of his poem.

'Of course.' And while listening to his pen moving over the paper it seemed to me that a

chance still remained, a small one, for the evidence that Germany offered could hardly be refuted. All the same, Justice demanded that a Catholic should be heard. The Colonel would be able to put up a good defence; and while Meyer corrected his poem a letter to him began in my head, half a dozen lines, reminding him that he had been away a long time in the country, and that evening I wrote asking him to come up and spend a few days with me.

XV

When I rushed up to tell him of my discovery he was in breeches and riding-boots, presenting in my drawing-room an incongruous spectacle of sport on a background of impressionist pictures.

'You don't mean to tell me that you brought me all the way from Mayo to argue with you about religion, and I in the middle of most important work?'

'What work?'

'Clearing the stone park.'

A darker cloud than that I had anticipated appeared in his long, narrow face, and as he seemed very angry I thought it better to listen to his plan for allowing the villagers to cut wood in the stone park. But the temptation to hear him argue that Literature and Dogma were compatible compelled me to break in.

'Do let me tell you; it won't take more than ten minutes for me to state my case. And this is a matter that interests me much more than the stone park. The question must be threshed out.'

He protested much, beseeching me to believe

that he had neither the learning nor the ability to argue with me.

'Father Finlay——'

'That's what Gill said. But the matter is one that can be decided by anybody of ordinary education; even education isn't necessary, for it must be clear to anybody who will face the question without prejudice that the mind petrifies if a circle be drawn round it, and it can hardly be denied that Dogma draws a circle round the mind.'

The Colonel grew very wroth, and said that ever since I had come to live in Ireland I had lived among Protestants, who were inclined to use me as a stalking-horse.

'That is not so. I came to Ireland, as you know, to help Literature, and if I see that Dogma and Literature are incompatible, I must say so.'

At that moment the parlourmaid opened the door and announced dinner.

'You'll be late for dinner, Maurice.'

'It is your own fault,' he cried, as he rushed upstairs.

As we sat down to dinner he begged me, in French, to drop the subject, Teresa being a Catholic.

'I suppose you are afraid she might hear something to cause her to lose her faith,' I said as she went out with the soup-tureen.

'I think one should respect her principles.'

The word inflamed me. 'Superstitions that were rammed into her.'

She returned with the roast chicken, and the question had to be dropped until she went to the kitchen to fetch an apple dumpling; and we did not

really settle down to 'Literature or Dogma' until coffee was brought in and my cigar was alight.

'It's a great pity that you always set yourself in opposition to all received ideas. I was full of hope when you wrote saying you were coming to Ireland. I suppose there's no use asking you not to publish. You will always go your own way.'

'But if I limit myself to an essay entitled "Literature or Dogma"—you don't object to that?'

'No, I don't say I object to it; but I'd rather not have the question raised just now.'

'I see you don't wish to discuss it. Isn't that so?'

'No, I don't mind discussing it. But I must understand you. Two propositions are involved in your statement—which is the one you wish to put forward? Do you mean that all books, which in your opinion may be classed as literature, contain things that are contrary to Catholic Dogma? Or do you mean that no man professing the Catholic faith has written a book which, in your opinion, may be classed as literature since the Reformation?'

'I put forward both propositions. But my main contention is that the Catholic may not speculate; and the greatest literature has come out of speculation on the value of life. Shakespeare——'

'There is nothing in Shakespeare contrary to Catholic Dogma.'

'You are very prompt.'

'Moreover, I deny that England had, at that time, gone over entirely to Protestantism. Italian culture had found its way into England; England had discovered her voice, I might say her language. A Renaissance has nothing in common with Puri-

tanism . . . and there is reason for thinking this. The Brownites?' And the Colonel, who is an extremely well-read man, gave me an interesting account of these earliest Puritans.

'The larger part of the English people may have been Protestant,' he continued, 'in 1590; but England hadn't entirely gone over to Protestantism. Besides, England's faith has nothing to do with Shakespeare. Nor does anyone know who wrote the plays.'

'My dear friend, you won't allow me to develop my argument. It matters nothing to me whether you prefer the lord or the mummer. The plays were written, I suppose, by an Englishman; that, at least, will not be denied; and my contention is—— No, there is no reason why I should contend, for it is sufficiently obvious that only an agnostic mind could have woven the fabric of the stories and set the characters one against the other. A sectarian soul would not have been satisfied to exhibit merely the passions.'

'Will you charge me again with interrupting your argument if I say that I know nothing in Shakespeare that a Catholic might not have written?'

'Well, I think if I were to take down a volume and read it, I could find a hundred verses. I see your answer trembling on your lips, that you don't require a hundred, but two or three. Very well. A Catholic couldn't have written, "There is nothing serious in mortality," for he believes the very contrary; nor could a Catholic have written "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." '

'What reason have you to suppose that Shakespeare was speaking in his own person? It seems

to me that by assuming he was doing so, you impugn his art as a dramatist, which is to give appropriate speeches to each of his characters; the writer must never transpire in a drama.'

'I'm afraid your religious zeal spurs you into dangerous statements, and you are in an entanglement from which you will find it difficult to extricate yourself. Shakespeare weaves a plot and sets will against will, desire against desire, but his plays are suffused by his spirit, and it is always the same spirit breathing, whether he be writing about carls or kings, virgins or lights-o'-love. The passage quoted from *Macbeth* is an excellent example of the all-pervading personality of the poet, who knew when to forget the temporal character of Macbeth, and to put into the mouth of the cattle-spoiler phrases that seem to us more suited to Hamlet. The poet-philosopher, at once gracious and cynical, wise with the wisdom of the ages, and yet akin to the daily necessity of men's foibles and fashions, is as present in the play of *Macbeth* as in *King Lear;* and the same fine agnostic mind we trace throughout the comedies, and the poems, and the sonnets, smiling at all systems of thought, knowing well that there is none that outlasts a generation.'

'I cannot see why a Catholic might not have written the phrases you quote. One can only judge these things by one's own conscience, and if I had thought of these verses——'

'You would have written them? I've always suspected you of being an Agnostic Catholic.'

'The difference between the Agnostic and the Catholic mind seems to me to be this—we all doubt

(to doubt is human), only in the ultimate analysis the Catholic accepts and the Agnostic rejects.'

'We know that the saints suffered from doubt, but the Agnostic doesn't doubt, though he is often without hope of a survival of his personality. A good case might be made out, metaphysically, if it weren't that most of us are without any earthly personality. Why then a heavenly one? I remember that you used to be a great admirer of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyám* . . . in your agnostic days; I presume that you will not, in the fervour of your Catholicism, tell me that a Catholic could have written the *Rubáiyát*?'

The Colonel was at first inclined to agree with me that there was a great deal that a Catholic could not have written in Fitzgerald's poem; but he soon recovered himself, and began to argue that all that Fitzgerald had done was to contrast ideas, maintaining that the argument was conducted very fairly, and that if the poem were examined it would be difficult to adduce proof from it of the author's agnosticism.

'But we know Fitzgerald was an agnostic?'

'You're shifting ground. You started by saying that the poems of Shakespeare and Fitzgerald revealed the agnosticism of the writers, you now fall back upon contemporary evidence.'

'I don't think I've shifted my ground at all. If we knew nothing about Fitzgerald's beliefs, there is abundant proof in his writings that he was an Agnostic. You'll have to admit that his opinions on the nothingness of life and the futility of all human effort, whether it strives after pleasure or pain, would read as oddly if introduced into the writings of Augustine

and Thomas Aquinas as sympathetic remarks about the Immaculate Conception would read in the works of Mr. Swinburne or Professor Huxley. The nothingness of our lives and the length of the sleep out of which we came, and the still greater length of the sleep which will very soon fall upon us, is the spring whence all great poetry flows, and this spring is perforce closed to Catholic writers for ever. Do you know the beautiful stanza in Moschus' *Lament for Bion*?

"Ah me! when the mallows wither in the garden, and the green parsley and the curled tendrils of the anise, on a later day these live again and spring in another year; but we, men, we, the great and mighty, or wise, when once we have died, in the hollow earth we sleep, gone down into silence, a right long, and endless and unawakening sleep."

Could these lines have been written by a Catholic?'

The Colonel could not see why not.

'Because . . . but, my dear friend, I won't waste time explaining the obvious. This you'll admit—that no such verses occur in Catholic poems?'

'As poignant expressions regarding the nothingness of life as any in Moschus, Shakespeare or Fitzgerald are to be found in the Psalms and Ecclesiastes. "Man walketh in a vain shadow and troubleth himself in vain."'

'The Bible wasn't written by Catholics.'

The Colonel had to admit that it wasn't, and after watching and rejoicing in his discomfiture for a while I went on to speak of Shakespeare's contemporaries, declaring them to be robust livers, whose philosophy was to live out their day as intensely as possible,

lovers of wine and women, frequenters of the Mermaid Tavern and of wenches, haters of the Puritan.

'You'll not claim Marlowe, I suppose? You'll admit that there was very little Catholic about him except a very Catholic taste for life. You mentioned just now the Brownites; they were overcome, you tell me, for the time being. But Puritanism is an enemy, if it be really one, that I can meet in a friendly spirit. Landor says that Virgil and St. Thomas Aquinas could never cordially shake hands; but I dare say I could shake hands with Knox.' The Puritan closed the theatres, an act which I won't pretend to sympathize with; but England's dramatic genius had spent itself, and for its intolerance of amusement Puritanism made satisfactory amends by giving us Milton, and a literature of its own. Of course everything can be argued, and some will argue that Milton's poem was written in spite of Puritan influence; but this I do think, that if ever a religious movement may be said to have brought a Literature along with it, Puritanism is that one. As much as any man that ever lived, Milton's whole life was spent in emancipating himself from Dogma. In his old age he was a Unitarian.'

'You've forgotten *The Pilgrim's Progress*, written out of the very heart of the language, and out of the mind of the nation.'

'Thank you for reminding me of it. A manly fellow was Bunyan, without clerical unction, and a courage in his heart that nothing could cast down, the glory and symbol of Puritanism for ever and ever.'

'Puritanism is more inspiring than Protestantism; it is a more original attitude of mind——'

'Original, yes, I agree with you. . . . The agnostic mind is the general mind, the mind which we bring into the world.'

'Milton was a Unitarian, Bunyan a Puritan; where does your Protestantism come in? Who is the great Protestant poet?'

'I don't limit Protestantism to the Established Church. Protestantism is a stage in human development. But if you want a poet who would shed the last drop of his blood for the Established Church, there is one, Wordsworth, and he is still considered to be a pretty good poet; Coleridge was nearly a divine.'

'You make a point with Wordsworth, I admit it. He seems, however, to have overstepped the line in his *Intimations of Immortality.*'

'But you miss my point somewhat; it is that there is hardly any line of Protestantism to overstep.'

'I set Newman against——'

'Against whom? Not against Wordsworth, surely? And if you do think of the others—shall I enumerate?'

'It wouldn't be worth while; it is evident that all that is best in England has gone into agnosticism.'

'And into Protestantism; confronted by Wordsworth and Coleridge, you can't deny to Protestantism a large share in the shaping of modern poetry. But there isn't a Catholic writer, only a few converts.'

'Newman.'

'But, my dear Colonel, we cannot for one moment compare Newman's mind to Wordsworth's or Coleridge's? To do so I may contend is ridiculous, without laying myself open to a charge of being much addicted to either writer. Wordsworth

moralized Nature away, and it is impossible, for me, at least, to forgive him his:

> "A primrose at the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him—
> And it was nothing more."

That "nothing more" is a moral stain that no time shall wash away. One would have thought that flowers, especially wild flowers, might be freed from all moral obligations. I am an Objectivist, reared among the Parnassians, an exile from the Nouvelle Athènes, and neither poet has ever unduly attracted me. Three or four beautiful poems more or less in the world aren't as important as a new mind, a new way of feeling and seeing. Mere writing——'

'A theory invented on the spot so as to rid yourself of Newman.'

'There you are mistaken. Allow me to follow the train of my thoughts, and you will understand me better. And don't lose your head and run away frightened if I dare to say that Newman could not write at all. But you have dislocated my ideas a little. Allow me to continue in my own way, for what I'm saying to you to-day will be written to-morrow or after, and talking my mind to you is a great help. I'm using you as an audience. Now, we were speaking about Coleridge, and I was saying that the mere fact that a man has written three or four beautiful poems is not sufficient; my primary interest in a writer being in the mind that he brings into the world; by a mind I mean a new way of feeling and seeing. I think I've said that before, but no harm is done by repeating it.'

'If you'll allow me to interrupt you once more, I will suggest that Newman brought a new way of feeling and seeing into the world—a new soul.'

'I suppose he did; a sort of ragged weed which withered on till it was ninety. It is a mistake to speak of him as a convert to Catholicism; he was a born Catholic if ever a man was born one. Were it not for him the term "a born Catholic" would be a solecism, for at first sight it doesn't seem very easy to understand how a man can be born a Catholic. A man is born blind, or deaf, or dumb, a hunchback, or an idiot, but it's difficult to see how he can be born a Catholic. Yet it is so; Newman proves it. A born Catholic would seem to mean one predisposed to rely upon the help of priests, sacraments, texts, amulets, medals, indulgences; and, Newman, you will not deny, brought into the world an inordinate appetite for texts, decrees, councils, and the like; even when he was a Protestant he was always talking about his Bishop. He was disposed from the beginning to seek authority for his every thought. Obedience in spiritual matters is the watchword of the Catholic, and surely Newman was always replete with it. He was a born Catholic; he justified the phrase. My dear Colonel, I'm aware that I'm delivering a little sermon, but to speak to you like this is a great help to me. . . . He seems to have been the least spiritual of men, bereft of all sense of divinity. He seems to have lived his life in ignorance that religion existed before Christianity, that Buddhism preceded it, and that in China—— But we need not wander so far afield. Newman was a Sectarian,

if ever there was one, astride on a rail between Protestantism and Catholicism, timidly letting down one leg, drawing it back, and then letting down the other leg. In the 'sixties men were very much frightened lest their ancestors might turn out to be monkeys, and a great many ran after Newman clapping their hands in praise of his broken English.'

'Broken English!' interrupted the Colonel.

'Yes, broken mutterings about an Edict in the fourth century, and that the world has been going astray ever since. He seems to have really believed that the destiny of nations depended on the chatter of the Fathers, and he totters after them, like an old man in a dark corridor with a tallow-dip in his hand. A simple-minded fellow, who meant well, I think; one can see his pale soul through his eyes, and his pale style is on his face. The best that can be said about it is that it is homely. You never saw *The Private Secretary*, did you?'

The Colonel shook his head.

'When Mr. Spalding came on the stage, saying, "I obey my Bishop," I at once thought of Newman, and, though I have no shred of evidence to support my case, I shall always maintain that that amusing comedy was suggested by *The Apologia*. It seems to have risen out of it, and I can imagine the writer walking up and down his study, his face radiant, seeing Mr. Spalding as a human truth, a human objectification of an interest in texts, decrees, and in Bishops. I never thought of it before, but Newman confesses to Mr. Spalding's wee sexuality in *The Apologia*. I have been reading *The Apologia* this morning, and for the first time. Here it is:

"I am obliged to mention, though I do it with great reluctance, another deep imagination, which at this time, the autumn of 1816, took possession of me,—there can be no mistake about the fact; viz., that it would be the will of God that I should lead a single life. This anticipation, which has held its ground almost continuously ever since,—with the break of a month now and a month then, up to 1829, and, after that date, without any break at all,—was more or less connected in my mind with the notion, that my calling in life would require such a sacrifice as celibacy involved."

He is himself in this paragraph, and nothing but himself. Even on a subject in which his whole life is concerned he can only write dryly.'

And we wrangled for some time over 'the anticipation which has held its ground almost continuously.'

'I admit that it isn't very good; but how do you explain that he has always been considered a master of English?'

'All in good time, my dear Colonel. We are now concerned with Newman's mind; it is the mind that produces the style. Listen to this:

"The Catholic Church holds it better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremest agony, as far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say, should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse."

This passage, I believe, was read with considerable piety and interest by the age which produced it, and

I wonder why it has fallen out of favour; for to sentimentalize is to succeed, and it was really very kind of Newman to sentimentalize over the miseries which our lightest sins cause our Creator. An unfortunate case his is indeed, since the Catholic Church holds that venial sins are committed every moment of the day and night. The Creator torments us after we are dead by putting us into hell, but while we are on earth we give him hell. And our difficulties don't end with the statement that we make the Creator's life a hell for him, for we are told that it would be better that all humanity should perish in extremest agony than that, etc. If that be so, why doesn't the Creator bring humanity to an end? The only possible answer to this question is that the Creator and the Catholic Church are not agreed on the point, and it would be pretentious on my part to offer arbitration. They must settle their differences as best they can. I'm afraid, Colonel, you look at me a little contemptuously, as if you thought my criticism frivolous.'

'Logically, of course,' the Colonel answered—'logically, of course, Newman is right.'

We wasted at least ten minutes discussing how something that seemed utterly absurd could be said to be logical; and to bring the discussion to an end, I reminded the Colonel that Carlyle had said that Newman's mind was not much greater than that of a half-grown rabbit.

'Perhaps Carlyle libelled the rabbit; he should have said the brain of a half-grown insect, a black-beetle.'

But,' said the Colonel, 'do you believe the black-

beetle to be less intelligent than the rabbit? In my experience——'

'I'm inclined to agree with you, but we're wandering from the point. I want to draw your attention to some passages, and to ask you if they are as badly written as they seem to be?'

'When you say that Newman wrote very badly, do you mean that he wrote in a way which does not commend itself to your taste, or that he wrote incorrectly?'

'His sentences are frequently incorrect, but I don't lay stress on their occasional incorrectness. An ungrammatical sentence is by no means incompatible with beauty of style; all the great writers have written ungrammatically; I suppose idiom means ungrammatical phrases made acceptable by usage; dialect is generally ungrammatical; but Newman's slips do not help his style in the least. You're watching me, my dear Colonel, with a smile in your eyes, wondering into what further exaggeration my detestation of Catholicism will carry me.'

'You have abused Newman enough. Let us get to facts. You say that he writes incorrectly.'

'The passage in which he deplores the suffering that man causes God, convinced me that his mind was but a weed, and, though there was no necessity for my doing so, I said: "Let us see how he expresses himself." You will admit that a man of weak intellect cannot write a fine style.'

'Let us get to the grammatical blunders which you say you have discovered in Newman.'

I turned to the first pages and read:

'He, emphatically, opened my mind, and taught me to think and to use my reason.'

'Don't you think, Colonel, that "emphatically opened my mind" is a queer sentence for "a master of English style" to write, and that we should search in Carlyle or Landor a long while before we came upon such draggle-tailed English as we read on page 7:

"He, emphatically, opened my mind, and taught me to think and to use my reason. After being first noticed by him in 1822, I became very intimate with him in 1825, when I was his Vice-Principal at Alban Hall. I gave up that office in 1826, when I became Tutor of my College, and his hold upon me gradually relaxed. He had done his work *towards me* or nearly so, when he had taught me to see with my own eyes and to walk with my own feet. *Not* that I had *not* a good deal to learn from others still, but I influenced them as well as they me, and co-operated rather than merely concurred with them. As to Dr. Whately, his mind was too different from mine for us to remain long *on one line.*"

I know folks that is in the vegetable line, and I think I know one chap who should be "tuk" up for the murder of the King's English if he warn't dead already.

"I recollect how dissatisfied he was with an Article of mine in the *London Review*, which Blanco White, good-humouredly, only called Platonic. When I was diverging from him in opinion (which he did not like), I thought of dedicating my first book to him, in words to the effect that he had not only taught me to think, but to think for myself. He left Oxford in 1831; after that, as far as I can recollect,

I never saw him but twice, when he visited the University; once in the street in 1834, once in a room in 1838. From the time that he left, I have always felt a real affection for what I must call his memory; for, at least from the year 1834, he made himself dead to me. He had practically *indeed given me up* from the time that he became Archbishop in 1831; but in 1834 a correspondence *took place* between us,"

A prize fight takes place; a correspondence begins.

"which, though conducted, especially on his side in a friendly spirit, was the expression of differences of opinion which *acted as a final close* to our intercourse. My reason told me that it was impossible we could have *got on together* longer, had he stayed in Oxford; yet I loved him too much to bid him farewell without pain. After a few years had passed, I began to believe that his influence on me in a higher respect than intellectual advance,"

He means "than that of" intellectual advance.

"(I will not say through his fault) had not been satisfactory. I believe that he has *inserted sharp things* in his later works about me. They have not come in my way, and I have not thought it necessary to seek out what would pain me so much in the reading."

The next page consists mainly of quotations from Dr. Whately, who apparently is capable of expressing himself, and we pick up Newman further on.

"The case was this: though at that time I had not read Bishop Bull's *Defensio* nor the Fathers, I was just then *very strong* for that ante-Nicene view of the Trinitarian doctrine, which some writers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, *have accused of wearing* a sort of Arian exterior."

'I really don't see,' said the Colonel, 'that that sentence is——'

'Don't trouble to defend it. There is worse to come. But how is it that the writer of such sentences is still spoken about as a master of style? Am I the only man living who has read *The Apologia?* It is almost impossible to read; that I admit.

"It would be against my nature to act otherwise than I do; but besides, it would be to forget the *lessons* which I *gained* in the experience of my own history in the past."

One doesn't gain lessons. How shall we amend it?—"the experience I gained from the lessons of my own history."

"The Bishop has *but* said that a certain Tract is 'objectionable,' *no reason being stated.*"

"without giving his reasons, the Bishop has only said that a certain Tract is objectionable," is how the editor of the halfpenny paper would probably revise Newman's sentence. And who will say that the revised text is not better than the original?

"As I declared on occasion of Tract 90, I claimed, in behalf of *who would* in the Anglican Church,"

Can he mean those who so desired in the Anglican Church? But it would take too long to put this passage right, for it is impossible to know exactly what "the greatest master of lucid English" meant—

"the right of holding with Bramhall a comprecation with the Saints, and the Mass all but Transubstantiation with Andrewes, or with Hooker that Transubstantiation itself is not a point for Churches to part communion upon,"

The kind of English that one would rap a boy of twelve over the knuckles for writing!

"or with Hammond that a General Council, truly such, never did, never shall err in a matter of faith,"

Upon my word, I believe the present Duke of Norfolk to be the author of *The Apologia.* A thousand years of Catholicism is required for anyone to write like this.

"or with Bull that man had in Paradise, and lost on the fall, a supernatural habit of grace,"

The style is the man, a simpleton cleric, especially anxious about his soul; no, I am mistaken—about a Text.

"or with Thorndike that penance is a propitiation for post-baptismal sin, or with Pearson that the all-powerful name of Jesus is no otherwise *given* than in the Catholic Church."

What does he mean by "given"? In what sense? Does he mean that the name of Jesus is "rendu" in all churches in the same way? But, then, what exactly does he mean by "given"?'

The Colonel, who writes a letter to a newspaper as well as anybody I know, took the book from my hand, saying:

'It is barely credible . . . I can write as well as that myself.'

'A great deal better,' I answered, and we continued to look through *The Apologia,* astonished at the feebleness of the mind behind the words, and at the words themselves.

'Like dead leaves,' I said.

'What surprises me is the lack of distinction,' the Colonel murmured.

'If the writing were a little worse it would be better,' I answered. 'Am I going too far, my dear Colonel, if I say that *The Apologia* reads more like a mock at Catholic literature than anything else; and that it would pass for such if we didn't know that it was written in great seriousness of spirit, and read with the same seriousness? No Protestant divine ever wrote so badly. Perhaps Newman——'

'Haven't you read anything but *The Apologia*?'

'No, and there is no reason why I should.'

'How would you like to be judged by one book?'

'I have shown my friends the passages I have been quoting, and they think he wrote better when he was a Protestant.'

'I see your article on Newman from end to end. That Newman was a great writer until he became a Catholic is a pretty paradox which will suit your style. You will be able to discover passages in his Protestant sermons better written, no doubt, than the passages you select from *The Apologia*.' The Colonel lit his candle, and I could hear him laughing good-humouredly as he went upstairs to bed.

'It is dangerous to name a quality,' I said to him next morning at breakfast, 'whereby we may recognize a great writer, for as soon as we have done so somebody names somebody whom we must confess deficient in the quality mentioned. The perils of definition are numerous, but most people will agree with me that all great writers have possessed an extraordinary gift of creating

images, and if that be so, Newman cannot be called a writer. We search vainly in the barren, sandy tract of *The Apologia* for one, finding only dead phrases, very often used so incorrectly that it is difficult to tell what he is driving at; "driving at" is just the kind of worn-out phrase he would use without a scruple.'

'You are judging Newman by *The Apologia.*'

'I admit I haven't read any other book. But dear Edward once invited me to look into—I have forgotten the title, but I remember the sentence that caught my eye—"Heresy stalks the land," and you will agree with me that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the average reporter would be ashamed to write the words . . . unless he were in a very great hurry.'

'Newman wrote *The Apologia* in a great hurry.'

'However great your hurry, you couldn't, nor could any of the friends who come here on Saturday night, write as badly, and unless we hold that to be always thin and colourless is a style——'

'You've a good case against him, but I'm afraid you'll spoil it by overstatement.'

'My concern is neither to overstate nor to understate, but to follow my own mind, faithfully, tracing its every turn. An idea has been running in my head that books lose and gain qualities in the course of time, and I have worried over it a good deal, for what seemed to be a paradox I felt to be a truth. Our fathers weren't so foolish as they appear to us to be in their admiration of *Lara, The Corsair, The Bride of Abydos, The Giaour;* they breathed into the clay and vivified it, and when weary of "romance"

they wandered into theology, and were lured by a mirage, seeing groves of palm-trees, flowers, and a bubbling rill, where in truth there was nothing but rocks and sand and a puddle. And while Byron and Newman turn to dust Shakespeare is becoming eternal.'

'There are degrees, then, in immortality?'

'Of course. The longer the immortality the more perfect it becomes, Time putting a patina upon the bronze and the marble and the wood, and I think upon texts; you never will persuade me that the text that we read is the text read in 1623.'

The Colonel raised his sad eyes from *The Apologia* into which they had been plunged.

'I'll admit that we never seem to get any further in metaphysics than Bishop Berkeley. I see,' he said a few minutes later, 'that Newman has written a preface for this new and insufficiently revised edition. Have you read it?'

'No, but I shall be glad to listen if you'll read it to me after breakfast.'

As soon as he had finished his eggs and bacon, the Colonel fixed his glasses a little higher on his nose, and it was not long before we began to feel that our tasks were hard, one as hard as the other, and when the last sentence was pronounced, the Colonel, despite his reluctance to decry anything Catholic, was forced to admit a lack of focus in the composition.

'He wanders from one subject to another, never finishing.'

'Excellent criticism! What you say is in agreement with Stevenson, who told an interviewer that if

a man can group his ideas he is a good writer, though the words in which he expresses himself be tasteless, and, as you say, Newman, before he has finished with his third section, returns to his first; from the fifth he returns to the fourth, and in the sixth section we find some points that should have been included in the second.'

The Colonel did not answer; and feeling that I owed something to my guest, I said:

'The last time you were here you mentioned that you hoped to be able to get one of the gateways from Newbrook.'

The Colonel brightened up at once, and told me that he was only just in time, for the stones were about to be utilized by the peasants for the building of pigstyes and cottages. But he had followed them in his gig through the country, and had brought them all to Moore Hall, and was now only waiting for me to decide whether I would like the gateway built in a half-circle or in a straight line. The saw-mill he hoped to get into working order very soon.

'It will be of great use for cutting up the timber that we shall get out of the stone park.'

'Isn't it in working order?'

With emphasis and interest the Colonel began to relate the accident the saw-mill had met with on the way from Ballinrobe; as it was entering the farm-yard one of the horses had shied, bringing the boiler right up against a stone pillar, starting some of the rivets. A dark cloud came into his face, and I learned from him that he had very foolishly given heed to the smith at Ballinrobe, a braggart who had sworn he could rivet a boiler with any man in Ireland;

but when it came to the point he could do nothing. The Castlebar smith, a very clever man, had not succeeded any better, but there was a smith at Cong——

'A real Cuchulain.'

'The story, I admit, is assuming all the proportions of an epic,' the Colonel replied joyously, and I allowed him to tell me the whole of it, listening to it with half my brain, while with the other half I considered the height of the Colonel's skull and its narrowness across the temples.

'A refined head,' I said to myself, and it seemed to me that I had seen, at some time or other, the same pinched skull in certain portraits of ecclesiastics by Bellini and the School of Bellini: 'but not the Colonel's vague, inconclusive eyes,' I added. 'Italy has always retained a great deal of her ancient Paganism; but Catholicism absorbed Spain and Ireland. It is into Spanish painting that we must look for the Colonel, and we find most of him in Velasquez, a somewhat icy painter who, however, relished and stated with great skill the Colonel's high-pitched nose, the drawing of the small nostrils, the hard, grizzled moustache. He painted the true Catholic in all his portraits of Philip, never failing to catch the faded, empty look that is so essentially a part of the Catholic face. Our ideas mould a likeness quickly if Nature supplies certain proportions, and the Colonel—when he fattens out a little, which he sometimes does, and when his mind is away—reminds me of the dead King. Of course, there are dissimilarities. Kingship creates formalities, and the Spanish Court must have robbed Philip of all sense of humour, or

buried it very deeply in his breast, for it is recorded that he was so pleased on one occasion with the splendid fight that a bull put up against the picadors, that he did not deem any swordsman in Spain worthy of the honour of killing him; the bull had earned his death from the highest hand in the land, and arming himself with an arquebuse or caliver, he walked across the arena and shot the bull with his own kingly hand. He must have walked towards the bull with a kingly stride—a sloven stride and a kingly act would be incompatible—he must have walked as if to music; but the Colonel has little or no ear for music, and his walk is, for this reason or another, the very opposite to Philip's. He slouches from side to side, a curious gait, the reader will say, for a soldier of thirty years, but very like himself, and therefore one likes to see it, and to see him preparing for it, hustling himself into his old yellow overcoat in the passage. He never carries a stick or umbrella; he slouches along, his hands dangling ugly out of the ends of the cuffs. To what business he is going, I often wonder, as I stand at the window watching him, remembering all the while how he had lain back in his arm-chair after breakfast, reading a book, his subconsciousness suggesting to him many different errands, and at last detaching him from his book or his manuscript, for the Colonel has always meditated a literary career for himself as soon as he was free from the army.

There are people of to-day, to-morrow, and yesterday; and the Colonel is much more of yesterday than of to-day. If he does not defend the Inquisition directly, he does so indirectly—all religions have

persecuted, for it is the nature of man to persecute, and he is unable to understand that Protestantism and Rationalism together redeemed the world from the disgrace of the Middle Ages. His ideas clank like chains about him, but not to the ordinary ear, for the Colonel is reserved by nature; only a fine ear can hear the clanks. Balzac would never have thought of the Colonel for a modern story, but would have placed him—— I have sufficient confidence in Balzac's genius to believe that he would have placed him in a Spanish setting; for the Colonel's mind is so archaic that his clothes distress even me. I am not good at clothes, but I am sure it is because his natural garment, the doublet, is forbidden him that he dresses himself in dim grey hues or in pepper-and-salt. He has never been seen in checks or fancy waistcoats, or in a bright-coloured tie. He goes, however, willingly into breeches; at Moore Hall he is never out of breeches; breeches remind him of his racing and hunting days, besides being convenient. So far can his country gear be explained, but why he sometimes comes up to Dublin in breeches, presenting, as I have said, an incongruous spectacle of sport in my drawing-room on a background of impressionist pictures, I am unable to offer any opinion.

XVI

'A telegram, sir.'

'Will you please to get the Colonel's room ready, and tell him, when he arrives, that I shan't be free for a couple of hours? I'm busy with *The Lake*.' And about half-past four I went down to the dining-

room and found him in an arm-chair surrounded by books: *Imaginary Portraits, Evelyn Innes, Wild Wales,* and a book of Irish Folk-Tales, and he was reading Strauss's *Life of Jesus.*

'He makes some very good points,' he said, and I encouraged him to continue in his appreciation of Strauss's skill as a dialectician; but on pressing him to say that the book was influencing him, he said that his mind had been made up long ago.

'Then you are merely reading languidly, without taking sides; a cricket-match seen from the windows of a railway train—that's about all.'

The Colonel laughed, and admitted that I had correctly described the interest which he took in Strauss's book, and this opened up an interesting discussion.

'It seems to me that to read without drawing conclusions is fatal. We have known many men and women in our youth who could neither read nor write, but who were very clever at their trades, far cleverer than those who have taken their place and learned the piano. Mahomet could neither read nor write.'

'Universal education is one of the mistakes of the century,' the Colonel said.

'It may be that you're right, and it may be that you're wrong, but the Catholic method, which is to encourage the acquisition of knowledge while enjoining that the student must refrain from drawing conclusions, seems to me especially well adapted to the destruction of the intellect.'

Tea was brought in, and the Colonel said he had come up for a meeting of the Coisde Gnotha, and must go back on Saturday.

'On Saturday!'

'I must get back to look after the men.'

'Your sawyers? I suppose Paddy Walshe wants some rafters for his barn?'

'No, there's the garden. Kavanagh is a splendid vegetable grower, but he doesn't understand the fruit-trees. I have to look after them myself. The meeting begins at eight. Would you mind if we were to dine at seven or a little before?'

It was irritating to be asked to change the hour of dinner for the sake of so futile a thing as a meeting of the Coisde Gnotha, and though I replied 'Of course,' I could not refrain from adding: 'In fifty years' time no one will speak Irish unless you procure a parrot and teach her. Parrots live a long while; an Irish-speaking Polly in a hundred years' time! what do you think, Maurice? And about that time Christianity will be extinct.'

The Colonel laughed good humouredly, he hustled himself into his old yellow overcoat, and went away leaving me disconcerted, irritated against him, and still more against myself, for it was impossible not to feel that I was abominably unsympathetic to other people's ideas. But am I? Only when phantoms are cherished because they are phantoms. We are all liable to mistake the phantom for reality. I followed the Irish language for a while, but as soon as I discovered my mistake I retraced my steps. Not so the Colonel. He knows at the bottom of his heart that the Irish language cannot be revived, that it would take two hundred years to revive it, and that even if it were revived nothing would come of it unless Ireland dropped Catholicism.

The lamp burned brightly on the table, and, rising from the arm-chair to light a cigar, I caught sight of my face and wondered at my anger against my brother, a sort of incoherent, interior rumbling, expressing itself in single words and fragments of sentences. An evil self seemed to be stirring within me; or was it that part of our nature which lurks in a distant corner of our being and sometimes breaks its chain and overpowers the normal self which we are pleased to regard as our true self? Everyone has experienced the sensation of spiritual forces at war within himself, but does he ever suspect that the abnormal self which has come up to the surface and is influencing him may be influencing him for his good; at all events, for some purpose other than the generally received one—the desire to lead poor human nature into temptation. The Christian idea of horns and hooves and tail has been rammed into us so thoroughly that we seldom cease to be Christians; but I must have nearly ceased to be one in the evening I am describing, for I seemed to be aware all the while that there was good purpose behind my anger at my brother's untidy mind. I was not certain what adjective to apply to it—untidy, unfinished, or prejudiced.

'He reads Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, admitting that no proofs, however conclusive, would persuade him that the son of Mary and Joseph was anything else but the Son of God. Christ never said that he was, and I suppose he knew. Even St. Paul. . . . How precisely I can see that brother of mine,' I cried, surprised myself at the clearness with which I remembered the long, pear-shaped head with some

fine lines in it; 'but too narrow at the temples,' I muttered, 'and the eyes are vague and lacking in the light of any great spiritual conviction, and they tell the truth, for has he not admitted to me that substantially the Host does not change, and the rest is merely whatever philosophical idea you like to attach to it? Worse still, he has said that the Decrees the Pope issues affecting excommunication do not interest him in the least, and this proves him to be a heretic, a Modernist. He always eats meat on Friday; of course he may have obtained a dispensation to eat the chicken as well as the egg, but I am not at all sure that he acquiesces in priestly rule enough to apply for a dispensation; and I began to wonder how long it was since his last confession. When the Bishop questioned the parish priest on the subject, the Colonel was very angry, and said it was hitting below the belt. He did not go to Mass when he came to see me in Dublin until I reproached him for neglect of his duties, and then he never failed afterwards to step away to Westland Row, his white hair blowing over the collar of the old yellow overcoat—never failed while I was in the house, but when I left it he remained in bed, so I have been told. He may have been ill, but I don't believe it. There has always been a vein of humbug in the depths of his deeply affectionate nature; when he was a little child of four or five he was caught with his fingers in a jam-pot, but instead of saying, "I took the jam because I liked it," he fled to his mother and flung himself into her arms, begging of her not to believe the nurse, crying, "I am your own innocent yam" (lamb).'

The Colonel's key in the lock interrupted my

thoughts, and there he was before me, overflowing with anecdote, his hilarity as unpleasing as it was surprising; high spirits sit ill upon the constitutionally melancholy, and the humorous sententious are very trying at times. His chatter about the doings of the League seemed endless, and I felt that I could not abide that family attitude into which he at once fell: the hand held in front of the fire, the elbow resting on the knee. The Colonel had fattened in the face since his last visit. Everybody should cultivate a kindly patience, imitating Æ, who, while going his way, can watch others going theirs without seeming invidious or disdainful. But Æ was born with a beautiful mind, and can pass a criticism on a copy of bad verses, and send the poet home unwounded in his self-respect. He will never change. He knows himself to be immortal, and is content to overlook or claim my periodical aggressiveness as part of my character. But not being as wise as Æ, I would alter myself if I could. How often have I tried! In vain, in vain! We are what we are, for better or worse, and there are no 'stepping stones' . . . except in bad verses. Enough of myself and back to the Colonel.

He was telling me how one orator's loquacity had driven his supporters out of the room, and when the amendment was put there was nobody to support it. The incident amused me for a moment, and then a sudden sense of the triviality of the proceedings boiled up in my mind.

'Of course,' I said, 'the amendment you speak of was invaluable, and its loss a great blow to the movement. But tell me, do you propose to spend

the rest of your life coming up from Mayo to listen to these fellows chattering about the best means of reviving a language which the few who can speak it are ashamed to speak, or have fallen out of the habit of speaking it, like Alec McDonnell and his wife?'

'I have never denied that the difficulties are very great.'

'But of what use would the language be to anybody if it could be revived? Prayers, I have often said, are equally valuable in whatever language they may be said.'

The Colonel smiled a little contemptuously, and his smile irritated me still further.

'As I have said a thousand times, unless Ireland ceases to be Catholic——'

'That question has been gone into.'

'Gone into; but you've never been able to explain why there is so little Catholic literature. It must be clear to everybody that Dogma draws a circle round the mind; within this circle you may think, but outside of it your thoughts may not stray. An acorn planted in a pot——'

'But what has that got to do with the Irish language? Even if what you say be true, it seems to me that the small languages should be preserved. You were in favour of the movement till——'

'There's no use going over the whole argument again. You've tried to bring up your children Irish speakers, and have failed.'

The Colonel laughed, for he could not deny that he had failed in this respect.

'They must have professions.'

'You'd like other people to sacrifice their children's

chances of life for the sake of the Irish language, but you aren't prepared to go as far as you'd like others to go. You will only go half-way.'

'How is that?'

'You bring them up Catholics. The younger is in a convent school, and the elder is now with the Jesuits. I don't think that our father would have approved of the narrow, bigoted education which they are receiving.'

'I can't see why. He never disapproved of the religious orders.'

'You must feel that the atmosphere of a convent isn't manly, and will rob the mind of something, warp or bias it in a direction——'

'Of which you don't approve?'

'It seems to me that the mind of the child should be allowed to grow up more naturally.'

'You can't let a boy grow up naturally. He must be brought up in some theory of what is right and what is wrong. Now, I ask why my children should be taught your right and wrong rather than mine?'

'I admit that they must be taught something.'

'Once you admit that it seems to me that the parent is the proper person.'

'It all depends on what you mean by teaching. The Jesuit says: "Give me the boy till he is fourteen and I don't care who gets him after." And his words mean that the mind shall be so crushed that he will for ever remain dependent. I don't know if you remember a story . . . our mother used to tell of a beggar woman who went about Ireland with four or five blind children, their eyes resembling the eyes of those who are born blind so closely that

every oculist was deceived. But one day a child's crying attracted attention, and it was discovered that the mother had tied walnut-shells over its eyes, and in each shell was a beetle; the scratching of the beetle on the eyeball produced the appearance of natural blindness — an ingenious method, part, no doubt, of the common folklore of Europe, come down to us from the Middle Ages when the Courts of Kings had to be kept supplied with dwarfs, eunuchs, buffoons; amusing disfigurements were the fashion, and high prices were paid for them. We are too sensitive to hear even how a permanent leer may be put on a child's face, but we are very much interested in the crushing, I should say the moulding, of children's minds, and all over Europe the Jesuits are busy preparing monstrosities for the Courts of Heaven.'

'My dear George, St. Francis Assisi and St. Teresa, whom you admire so much, were prepared for Heaven in the Catholic religion, and there are others. St. John of the Cross is one to whom I am sure you will graciously extend your admiration.'

'To them, certainly, much rather than to the inevitable Aquinas; but every one of those belong to the Middle Ages.'

'Not St. Teresa.'

'The Middle Ages existed in Spain long after St. Teresa, for the burning of heretics went on till the end of the eighteenth century. Religions! The world is littered with religions; they grow, flourish, and die, and if you can't see that Christianity is dying——'

The Colonel spoke of revivals.

'After each revival,' I said, 'it grows fainter, and would be dead long ago if it hadn't been that children are taken young and their minds crushed. The Jesuits have admitted that that is so. "Give me the child," they cry.'

'Toby has learned nothing from the nuns except a shocking accent, and Rory is learning very little, and dislikes the Jesuits. I'm thinking of sending him to the Benedictines.'

'Monks or priests, it's all the same. You know how worthless the education was which we received at Oscott.'

'There was none. I admit that priests don't seem to be very good educationalists.'

'Then why have your sons educated by priests? Priests are in all the Catholic schools, but there are excellent Protestant schools——'

'And bring them up Protestants?'

'Why not?'

'You, an Agnostic!'

'Protestantism is harmless, as I have often pointed out to you. It leaves the mind free, or very nearly.'

'I can understand that you, who seem constitutionally incapable of seeing anything in life but art, should prefer Agnosticism, but I don't understand your proposing a Christian dogma for my children that you yourself don't believe in.'

'Don't you? Would you like to hear?'

'Very much.'

'I'll give you three excellent reasons. I look upon Protestantism as a sort of safeguard——'

'A sort of vaccine?'

'Just so. If the Agnostic catches the small-

pox he generally catches it in an acute form; and ninety-five per cent. remain in the religion they are brought up in. Isn't that so?'

'Well, let us hear your second reason.'

'Protestantism supplies a book out of which the child can learn. I think it is John Eglinton who says in one of his essays that, however beautifully a book may be written, it will not be read by the multitude for the sake of its style. Shakespeare is read in England, for England produced Shakespeare; and the Bible is read in England, for the Bible produced Protestantism. And Protestantism produced the Irish Bible, the one beautiful book you have. Catholics are forbidden to read it.'

'A stupid prohibition, for the difference between the Catholic and the Protestant version is so slight that not one reader in ten thousand would be able to trace it.'

'Yes, isn't it stupid? But what is to be done? I can think of nothing—can you? We learned no English at Oscott; any English I know I learned in Sussex out of the Prayer-Book, and gossiping with the labourers, bailiffs, and especially with game-keepers; game-keepers speak the best English. I can't tell why, but it is so.'

'A new reason for preserving the game laws.' A sally at which we both laughed.

'But I was going to give you a third reason for my preference for Protestantism. Protestantism engenders religious discussion. You'll admit that?'

'Indeed I will, and can imagine nothing more useless or tedious.'

'Useless it may be for the Catholic, who goes from

the cradle to the grave with every point of interest settled for him. How, then, can Catholics be intelligent? We know they're not. But what is much more interesting is the fact that they know themselves they aren't intelligent. They admit it freely. At dinner the other day I met a Catholic and spoke to him on this subject. He answered me that the Catholic religion absorbs a man's mind so completely that no energy is left for literary activities, only enough for the practical business of life.'

'I hate Catholics who speak like that. They're worse than Protestants. There are Uriah Heeps, I admit, and plenty of them, in our Church.'

'Servant-maids and working-folk are quite free from hypocrisy, and often I've heard them say, "It's strange we don't get on as well as Protestants." Once I heard a beggar in Galway saying, "There must be something in Protestants since they get on so well in the world." A wiser man than you, my dear friend, or shall I say a less prejudiced one? You remember I told you there was no Catholic literature when you were last in Dublin, but I didn't half state my case; the discussion wandered into an argument about Newman.'

'And what have you discovered since then?'

'That Russian literature is against you, Scandinavian, too, and, worst of all, North and South America.'

The mention of North and South America roused the Colonel, and he did not hesitate to say that it always astonished him that North America had produced so little literature.

'However little you may think of Poe, Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorn, and Prescott, you'll admit North America compares very favourably with South America. I believe that South America can show some records of missionary work done among the Indians.'

The Colonel replied that South America was colonized much later than North America—an answer which angered me, for I knew that the Colonel was relying on my ignorance of history.

'The first colonizations were made in Peru and Brazil, you know that very well. But what can it profit you to insist that Catholics have written books since the Reformation? What can it profit you to deny facts? Of course there is a book or two—one per cent., two per cent. of the world's literature—but if you were to tell me that there is no negro literature, you would think me very stupid if I were to answer, "Yes, there is. I can produce a good many songs from Hayti; I once knew a negro who had written a novel." Catholic literature has declined steadily since the Reformation, and to-day it is one degree better than Sambo.'

No sooner had the words passed my lips than I saw I had, as the phrase goes, 'given myself away,' for the negroes are nearly all Methodists or Wesleyans, and I mentioned the fact to the Colonel, feeling sure that if I did not do so he would mention it himself, but he refused to accept my suggestion, saying that he had once believed that religion was race and climate, but he thought so no longer. 'He has sunk deeper into Catholicism than I thought, he believes now in a universal truth;

for him there is no hope, but I can't allow his children to perish without saying a word in their favour,' and I spoke of Rory and Toby again.

'My children will have as good a chance of making their way as I have had. I was brought up a Catholic.'

'Why shouldn't your children have a better chance than we had? We were brought up in hunger and cold and superstition. You wouldn't subject your children to the same hardships?'

'The hardships at Oscott provided us with excellent constitutions.'

'Maybe so; but we learned nothing.'

'The only way,' said the impassible Colonel, 'that children may be educated is either by abolishing religious education in the schools, and nobody is in favour of that, or by sending them to schools, in which they will be taught the religion of their parents.'

'But what you call bringing up children in the religion of their parents is estranging them from every other influence, until they become incapable of thinking for themselves. "Give me the child till he's fourteen, and I don't care who gets him afterwards." There is no question of religious truth; there is no such thing, we know that; what concerns me is that your truth is being forced upon your boys to the exclusion of every other. You keep them from me lest they should hear mine.'

'I hope you will never say anything in the presence of my children that would be likely to destroy their faith. I rely on your honour.'

'It is no part of my honour to withold the truth,

or what I believe to be the truth, from any human being. The fact that you happen to be their father doesn't give you the right over their minds to deform and mutilate them as you please, any more than it gives you the right to mutilate their bodies. Gelding and splaying—— You don't claim such rights, do you?'

'And do you claim the right to seek my children out and destroy their faith?'

'Can you define the difference between faith and superstition? The right I claim is that of every human being, to speak what he believes to be the truth to whomever he may meet on his way. Brotherhood doesn't forfeit me that right.'

'Then I am to understand that you will seek my children out?'

'Seek them out, no. But do you keep them out of my way. But, if you think like this, you'd have done better not to have married a Protestant. I suppose your children believe their mother will go to hell; and if you love Ireland as well as you profess to, why did go into the English Army?'

'It's impossible for me to continue this argument any longer, your intention being to say what you think will wound me most. . . . What you have just said I know to have been said with a view to wounding my feelings.'

'No, but to express my mind. So they're not to get a chance? Well, it's a shame. Why shouldn't their mother have as much voice as you have in their education? Why shouldn't I have a voice?'

'In the education of my children!'

'We haven't an idea in common. We are as much

separated as though we came from the ends of the earth; yet we were brought up together in the same house, we learned the same lessons. That accursed religion has set us apart for ever.'

The Colonel walked out of the room suddenly, and I heard him take his hat from the table in the hall and go out of the house. The door closed behind him, and I sat in the silence, alarmed by his sudden departure. It seemed to me that I could see him walking, hardly conscious of the street he was passing through, absorbed by the horrible quarrel that had been thrust upon us, a quarrel that might never. . . . And I began to quake at the thought that we might never be friends again.

The argument had been conducted in quite a friendly spirit, here and there a little heated, but no more, till words had been put into my mouth that wounded him to the quick, sending him out of the house. He would come back and forgive me, no doubt.

But was it sure that he would? And even if he did, the quarrel would begin again the next time we met; the discussion had never ceased since the day he had unsuspectingly come up from Mayo to argue against me that Literature and Dogma are not incompatible. No matter what the subject of our conversation might be, it drifted sooner or later into religious argument, into something about Protestants and Catholics, and a moment after we were angry, hostile, alienated. Since boyhood our lives had been lived apart, but we had been united by mutual love and remembrances, and as the years went by we had begun to dream that the end of our lives should be

lived out together. He had written from South Africa that there was no one he would care to live with as much as with me, and no words that I can call upon can tell the eagerness with which I awaited his return from the Boer War. He was coming home on six months' leave; and three of these he spent with me in Ely Place—delightful months in which we seemed to realize the dearest wishes of our hearts. Our mutual love of Ireland brought us closer together than we had hoped was possible . . . and then? Bitterness, strife, disunion. He had been an idol in my eyes, and my idol lay broken in pieces about me—broken, and by whom? God knows; not by me . . . I swear it. That he would not write a book about camp-life in South Africa was a disappointment to me; his dilatoriness in getting grandfather's manuscript in order was another; and now his sticking to Catholicism, despite the proofs that I had laid before him of its inherent illiteracy, had estranged us completely.

An endless whirl of thoughts, and a sudden pause on a recollection of the words I had used: 'If you hate Protestantism, why did you marry a Protestant?' There could be no great harm in saying that. A man who has been married for fifteen years generally knows his wife's religion. Nor in the remark that followed it, that notwithstanding his love of Ireland he had gone into the English Army; for a man doesn't go into the English Army and remain in it for thirty years without knowing that he is in it; and I began to wonder if he had gone into the army because he was afraid he could not make his living in any other way? Or was there behind his mind,

far back in it, some little flickering thought that if Ireland rose against English dominion he would be able to bring to the service of his country the tactics he had learnt in the enemy's ranks? A sentiment of that kind would be very like him, and I fell to thinking of him, following his life from the beginning of his manhood up to the present time. All his dreams had been of the Irish race, of its literature, of its traditions, and his clinging to Catholicism can be accounted for by his love of Ireland. Or was it that his mind lacked elasticity, and that he failed at the right moment to twist himself out of the theological snare? It must have been so, for one day, while playing at Red Indians in the woods of Moore Hall, during a rest under the lilac-bush that grows at the turn of the drive, I had asked him if he intended to continue to believe in all the priest said about his Sacraments and about God. A look came into his face, and he answered that he couldn't do without it—meaning religion. 'But why that religion?' I asked. The idea of changing his religion seemed to frighten him even more than dropping religion altogether; he has persisted in that faith, trying to believe all it enjoins, his thoughts and his deeds going down parallel lines—a true Irishman, his dreams always in conflict with reality. . . .

It seemed to me that some time had passed, for when I awoke from my reverie I was thinking of Balzac, thinking that I had read somewhere that it is not ideas which divide us, but *le choc des caractères.* Balzac must have written very casually when he wrote that, for surely the very opposite is the case.

Men are drawn together by their ideas; temperament counts for nothing, or for very little. 'But it is temperament,' I said, 'that creates our ideas,' and my mind reverted to the Colonel, and he stood up in my mind, Ireland in essence, the refined melancholy of her mountains and lakes, and her old castles crumbling among the last echoes of a dying language. In his face, so refined and melancholy, I could trace a constant conflict between dreams and reality, and it is this conflict that makes Ireland so unsuccessful. But I stop, perceiving that I am falling into the stuff one writes in the newspapers. Why judge anybody? Analyze, state the case; that is interesting, but pass no judgments, for all judgments are superficial and transitory. The Colonel has always been a sentimentalist. Something seemed to break in my mind. 'Yes, a sentimentalist he has always been. Now I understand him,' and I thought for a long while, understanding not only my brother, but human nature much better than I had done at the beginning of the evening. It was like looking under the waves, seeing down to the depths where strange vegetation moves and lives. The waves flowed on and on, and I peered, and I dreamed, and I thought, awaking suddenly with this cry upon my lips: 'Freed from the artificial life of the army he is free to follow an idea, and the Gael loves to follow an idea rather than a thing, and the more shadowy and elusive the idea the greater the enchantment it lends, and he follows the ghost of his language now with outstretched arms. But how little feeling there is in me!' I cried, starting up from my chair. 'My brother all this while walking

the streets, his heart rent, and I sitting, meditating, dissecting him, arguing with myself.'

Now, the question to be settled was whether I should go to bed or wait for him to come in. To go to bed would be wiser, and speak to him in the morning. But I should lie awake all night, thinking. It seemed impossible to go to sleep until some understanding had been arrived at.

XVII

There seemed a little strain in his voice, and I wondered what thoughts had passed through his mind last night about me, and if his affection for me had really changed.

'If you leave like this it will never be the same again,' and I begged of him not to go away. 'You thought that I spoke with the express intention of wounding your feelings, but you are wrong.'

He did not answer for some time, and when I pressed him he repeated what he had said before, adding that the engagement could not be broken.

'And when are you going back to the West?'

'At the end of next week or the week following.'

'But won't you spend the interval here?'

'No; I'm going on to see some other friends.'

'And then?'

'Well, then I shall go back to the West.'

'I'm sorry, I'm sorry . . . this religion has estranged us.'

'Don't let us speak on that subject again.'

'No, let us never speak on that subject again.'

'But you can't help yourself.'

'By going away you'll give importance to words which they really don't deserve. Nothing has happened, only a few words—nothing more. And after all, you can't blame me if I'm interested in your children. It's only natural.'

'You said you'd seek my children out for the express purpose——'

'Excuse me; I said I wouldn't seek them out.'

And as I stood looking at him the thought crossed my mind that there was a good deal to be said in support of his view. 'I suppose that if the father's right to bring up his children as he chooses be taken from him, he loses all his pleasure in his children.'

'It seems the more humane view.'

His voice altered, and, seeing that we were on the point of being reconciled, I said: 'You always had more conscience than I had, even when you were four years old you objected to my putting back the clock in the passage to deceive Miss Westby.'

In the hope of distracting his thoughts from last night's quarrel, I asked him if he remembered my first governess, Miss Beard. I remember crying when she went away to be married; and it was possibly for those tears that she came to see me at Oscott, and brought a cake with her. A tall, blond girl succeeded her, but she had to leave because of something the matter with her hip.

The Colonel did not remember either.

'Nor grandmother?'

'Oh yes, I remember grandmother quite well.'

'But only as a cripple. My first memory is going along the passage with her to the dining-room, and

hearing her say the gingerbread nuts were too hard, and my first disappointment was at seeing them sent back to the kitchen. She promised that some more should be made. But a few days or a few weeks after she was picked up at the foot of the stairs. She never recovered from that fall; she never walked again, but was carried out by two villagers in a chair on poles.'

'I remember seeing her dead, and the funeral train going up the narrow path through the dark wood to Kiltoon.'

'Half-way up that pathway there is a stone seat. It was she who had it put there. She walked to Kiltoon every day till her accident. She is there now, and father and mother are there. The tomb must be nearly full of us. Are you going there? I'm not. Does it ever occur to you that we have very little more life to live, only the lag end of the journey? I can't believe myself to be an old man.'

'You're not.'

'I don't know what else to call myself. How unreal it all is! For if we look back, we discover very few traces of our flight. Our lives float away like the clouds. Father was in London fighting Ireland's battle when mother and I used to spend the evening together in the summer room—she in one arm-chair, I in another. Our lives begin in a grey dusk. I can remember settling myself in the chair every night and waiting for her to begin her tale of loneliness; and I must have enjoyed it, for when she started up out of her chair, crying, "Why, it's eleven o'clock; we must get to bed," I was loath to go. She used to read father's speeches.'

'To whom?'

'To grandmother. She was a young woman at the time—not thirty, and was glad when father's political career ended and he returned to live in Moore Hall with her. You're writing his life, and have read in *Ave* how he was pricked by a sudden curiosity to hear me read aloud, and how the long *ff's* broke me down again and again. My mother and Miss Westby were called in, and father assured us that he used to read the *Times* aloud to his parents when he was three. And then I think he ceased to interest himself in my education for some while—a respite much appreciated by me and my governess. He turned to racing——'

'The usual thing for an Irish gentleman of those days to do when he left politics.'

'You know about Wolf Dog and Carenna—you have read the subject up; but you don't remember the old Cook—the last of the first racing stud: an old mare that had drifted into the shafts of the side-car that used to take us to church and to Ballinrobe. How very Irish it all is! But when father gave up politics, she was sent to the Curragh to be served by Mountain Deer. Her first foal was a chestnut filly—Molly Carew—but she was too slow to win a selling race, and I don't know what became of her. She bred another chestnut filly—the Cat—and she was as slow as her sister—a very vicious animal that nearly killed both my father and mother. After her came Croagh Patrick, a brown colt. There seems never to have been any doubt that he was a good one. I remember hearing—and perhaps you do, too—that when the grooms appeared at the gate

with sieves of oats Croagh Patrick always came up the field streets ahead.'

'No, I never heard that. I'm glad you told me.'

'All the same, he didn't win his two-year-old races at the Curragh.'

'Yes he did; he won the Madrids, for I saw him win. He was a black, ratlike horse, with four white legs. And what I remember best is how I made my way to the railings, and gradually slipped down them till I was on my knees, for I wanted to say a little prayer that the horse might win; and I remember then how I looked round, terribly frightened lest anyone had seen me pray.'

'He couldn't have won the Madrids before he won the Steward's Cup for the handicapper let him in at six stone. It must have been as a four-year-old you saw him run, or in the autumn. You were a baby-boy when Croagh Patrick went to Cliff's to do his last gallops before running at Goodwood. I was at Cliff's at the time and saw him do them. Father and mother went away with the horse——'

'And what became of you?'

'I was left at Cliff's, and enjoyed myself immensely among the stable-boys. There was a green parrot in the parlour—it was the first time I had ever seen a parrot, and Polly was often brought out into the stable-yard, and I thought it cruel to throw water on her, till it was pointed out to me that the bird enjoyed her bath.'

'Who looked after you at Cliff's?'

'I don't know. Mrs. Cliff probably saw that I put on my trousers. But I remember the pony I

used to ride out on the downs, and Vulture, a horse so vicious that if he had succeeded in ridding himself of the boy he would have eaten him. The Lawyer was there at the time, the last half-bred that won a flat race. Once I lost myself on the downs. You never heard of my stay at Cliff's?'

'I always thought that you went straight from Moore Hall to Oscott.'

'After Goodwood father and mother went off somewhere, and presumably forgot all about me. Of course, they knew I was quite safe.'

'Among stable-boys! I don't think I should care to leave Rory and Ulick at a racing-stable for three weeks. How long were you there?'

'A month, perhaps; but I can't say. And then a little kid of nine was pitched headlong into the midst of a hundred and fifty boys. How well I remember leaving Cliff's for Oscott! My one thought at the time was that the train didn't travel fast enough, and all the way I was asking father how far we were from Oscott, and if we should get there before evening. You remember the fringe of trees and the gatehouse rising above them, and the great red brick building, the castellated tower with the clock in it, and the tall belfry? I left father and mother talking with the President in the pompous room reserved for visitors, and raced through the empty playgrounds (it was class-time) delirious with excitement; and it was with difficulty that I was found when the time came for father and mother to bid me good-bye. They were a little shocked, I think, at my seeming heartlessness, but I could only think of the boys waiting to make my acquaintance.

A few hours later they came trooping out of the class-rooms, formed a procession, and marched into the refectory, I bringing up the rear. Father Martin came down the refectory and, to my great surprise, told me that I must hold my tongue. As soon as he had turned his back I asked my neighbour in a loud voice why the priest had told me I wasn't to talk. The question caused a loud titter, and before the meal had ended I had become a little character in the school. I never told you of my first day at Oscott. . . . It seemed to me a fine thing to offer to match myself to fight the smallest boy present in the play-room after supper. But he was two or three years older than I was, and, though a Peruvian, he pummelled me, and the glamour of school-life must have begun to dim very soon—probably that very night, as soon as my swollen head was laid on the pillow. At Hedgeford Mrs. Cliff must have helped me a little, but at Oscott there was no one to help me. Imagine a child of nine getting up at half-past six, dressing himself, and beaten if he was not down in time for Mass. There was no matron, no kindness, no pity, nor, as well as I can remember, the faintest recognition of the fact that I was but a baby. It isn't to be wondered that, when my parents returned to see how their little boy was getting on, they found that the high-spirited child they had left at Oscott had been changed into a frightened, blubbering little coward that begged to be taken home. In those days children were not treated mercifully, and I remained at Oscott till my health yielded to cold and hunger and floggings. You remember my

coming home and hearing that I wasn't returning to Oscott for a year or two.'

'You very nearly died, and if it hadn't been for cod-liver oil you would have died. But how difficult it was to get you to take it!'

'One's whole nature revolts against it. Those two years spent at Moore Hall were the best part of my childhood. Long days spent on the lake, two boatmen rowing us from island to island, fishing for trout and eels. How delightful! We sought for birds'-nests in the woods and the bogs; I made a collection of wild birds'-eggs, and wrote to my school-fellows of my finds. One of our tutors, Feeney, passed you afterwards for the army. We had many tutors, but Father James Browne is the only one that I remember with real affection. He loved literature for its own sake. Father didn't. I always felt he didn't, and that's what separated us.'

'He was a man of action.'

'Yes, I suppose he was, and could, therefore, learn lessons.'

'He seems to have been a model schoolboy. It was not till he went to Cambridge——'

'Whereas I couldn't learn.'

'You could learn quickly enough when there was anything to be gained that you wanted especially;' and the Colonel reminded me that I had learnt up Greek and Latin history in a few weeks, because the award was a day's outing in Warwickshire.

'Anyone can learn a little history. I often asked mother if I was really stupid, but was never able to

get a clear answer from her. But you often see our old governess—would you mind asking her?'

'I have asked her, and she remembers you as the most amiable child she ever knew.'

'Did she tell you anything more about me?'

'No; I think that's all she said.'

'You like seeing the old people who knew us in childhood, but I don't. I never know what to say to them.'

The Colonel did not answer, and at the end of a long silence I asked him if he remembered being taken to Castlebar and measured for clothes, and travelling over to England in the charge of Father Lavelle, who was going to Birmingham to spend his holidays with his cousin, a provision-dealer.'

'I can never forget that shop,' the Colonel said; 'the smell of the cheese is in my nostrils at this moment. I always hated cheese.'

'You didn't like to stay the night there. You asked me, "Why did you agree to stay here?" I think it was because the people were so common.'

'I remember nothing of that, but I remember the provision dealer's shirt-sleeves clearly; his face is indistinct.'

'A plump, cheery fellow, who came round the great piles of butter and cheese and shook hands with Father Lavelle, and was introduced to us, and begged that we should stay to dinner. Dinner was served in the back-parlour, and was interrupted many times by customers.'

'I don't remember the dinner, but what I remember very well is that a number of people came in after dinner, and that a piper was sent for, and that

we were asked to say if he was as good as our Connaught pipers. They all turned towards us, waiting for us to speak, and I can remember my embarrassment, and my effort to get at a fair decision, and wishing to say that Moran was the better piper.'

'It is curious how one man remembers one thing and another another. No man remembers everything. The people coming in, and the piper and the discussion about the piping have passed completely out of my memory, but I do remember very well lying down together side by side on flock mattresses in a long garret-room under a window for which there was no blind, and you reproaching me again for having consented to stay the night, and I suppose to your complaint I must have answered, "You don't know Oscott." But perhaps I didn't wish to discourage you. In the morning we got into a cab; our trunks went on top, and I congratulated myself that there were six miles still between us and that detestable college, and wished the horse would fall down and break his leg.'

It was on my lips to say 'My God! you remember Oscott, and yet you're sending your son to be educated by priests.' But quarrelling with my brother would not save the boy, and I said:

'Things must have improved since then. Let us hope the windows in the corridors have been mended, and that a matron has been engaged to look after the smaller boys. Do you remember the dormitories, and thirty or forty boys, and a priest in a room at the end to see that we didn't speak to each other? All that was thought of was the modesty of the wooden partition. There were not sufficient bed-

clothes, we were often kept awake by the cold, and as for washing—none in winter was possible, the water in the jug being a solid lump of ice in the morning; but our ears were pinched by the Prefect because our necks were dirty. The injustice, the beastliness of that place—is it possible to forget it?'

'I remember praying on those cold mornings that I might not be sent to the Prefect's room to be beaten. Do you remember the order, "Go to the Prefect's room and ask for four or six," and we had to wander down a long passage, doors all the way on the right and left till we came to the last door? If the Prefect wasn't in we had to wait, and when he came to his room we told him who had sent us to him, and he took out of a cupboard a stick with a piece of waxed leather on the end of it, told us to hold out our hands, and we received four or six strokes delivered with all his strength.'

'He enjoyed it; men do enjoy cruelty, especially priests. I hope the food isn't so bad now as it was in the 'sixties.'

'The food that was given us at Oscott was worse than bad—it was disgusting,' the Colonel answered.

'Do you remember the bowl of slop called tea, and the other bowl of slop called coffee, and the pat of grease called butter? Some stale bread was handed about in a basket, and that was our breakfast; never an egg—a bleak meal, succeeded by half an hour's recreation, and then more lessons. At dinner, do you remember the iridescent beef, purple, with blue lines in it?'

'I'm convinced that very often it wasn't beef at all, but the carcass of some decayed jackass!'

'Whatever it was, I never touched it, but ate a little bread and drank a little beer. You couldn't touch the beef nor the cheese. Nor could my love of cheese enable me to eat it. What was it most like—soap, or decayed cork? It was like nothing but itself. Forty years have gone by and I remember it still.'

'One day in the week there were ribs of beef——'

'Those I used to eat; but the worst day of all was Thursday, for it was on that day large dishes of mince came up. I never touched it—did you?'

'Never,' the Colonel answered.

'Do you remember one morning at breakfast lumps of mince were discovered in the tea? The prefect looked into the bowl, handed to him, and acquiesced in the opinion that perhaps no tea or coffee had better be drunk that morning.'

But if the Colonel had forgotten that incident, he remembered the tarts: sour damson jam poured into crusts as hard as bricks, and these tarts were alternated with a greasy suet-pudding served with a white sauce that made it even more disagreeable.

'A horrible place!' I muttered; and we continued to speak of those meals, eaten in silence, listening to a boy reading, the Prefect walking up and down watching us. 'Was any place ever more detestable than Oscott? At five o'clock beer was served out—vinegar would have been better. And the bread!'

'At seven sloppy tea and coffee, greasy butter, bread that looked as if it had been thrown about the floors! And then the dormitories!'

The Colonel would not, of course, agree with me that any great harm is done to a boy by giving him

over, body and soul, to a priest; but he remembered that our Castlebar clothes were soon threadbare and in holes, and our letters home, begging for an order for new clothes, were disregarded.

'I think it must have been that father had lost money at racing, and as he hadn't paid the school fees, he didn't like to write to the President. When I left Oscott I used to hear people say they were cold, but I didn't understand what they meant. The hard life of Oscott gave us splendid health, which has lasted ever since.'

'Yes, it seems to have done that; and that's about all. We learned nothing.'

'Nothing whatever; in many respects we unlearned a great deal. I had learnt a good deal of French from our governess, but I forgot it all; yet we were taught French at Oscott.'

'Taught French! We weren't even taught English.'

'It was assumed that we knew English.'

'The English language begins in the Bible, and Catholics don't read the Bible. Do you remember the Bible stories we were given, written in very Catholic English?'

'Yes, I remember,' the Colonel answered; 'and I think it's a great mistake that the Bible isn't taught in Catholic schools. There is nothing that I admire more than the Psalms—those great solemn rhythms.'

'We used to hear the Gospels read out in chapel——'

The door opened: the parlourmaid had come to tell the Colonel that a man downstairs would like to speak to him, and he left the room abruptly.

'He never seems free from business,' I muttered. 'Just as the conversation was beginning to get interesting. Oscott had every chance of turning out a well-educated boy in him, for he was willing to learn; but with me it was different. Oscott didn't get a fair chance.' And I sat perplexed, unable to decide whether I could or would not learn, thinking it probable that my brain developed slowly, remembering that my mother had told me that father used to say, 'George is a chrysalis out of which a moth or butterfly may come.' Now, which am I? Would father have been able to tell if he had lived? Can anybody tell me? But why should I want anybody to tell me? I am a reasonable being, and should know whether I am moth or butterfly. But I don't. Every man has asked himself if he is moth or butterfly, and, receiving no answer, he begins to wonder at the silence that has so suddenly gathered round him. Out of the void memories arise, and he wonders if they have arisen to answer his question. There was a round table in grandfather's library and it was filled with books—illustrated editions of *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Arabian Nights;* and on the page facing the picture of Gulliver astride on the nipple of a young Brobdingnagian's breast, I used to read how she undressed Gulliver for the amusement of her girl-friends setting him astride on the nipple of one of her breasts. As she was forty-five feet high, Gulliver used to lean forward, clasping with both his arms the prodigious breast, very frightened lest he should fall; and I used to think that if she held out her apron I should not mind. But Swift speaks of the smells that these hides used to exhale, and dis-

gusted I would close the book and open the *Arabian Nights* and read again and again the story of the two travellers who saw a huge wreath of smoke rise out of the sea; it quickly shaped itself into a Genie, and, frightened out of their wits, they climbed into a high tree and watched him come ashore and unlock a crystal casket. A beautiful lady stepped out, and, when he had fully enjoyed himself, he fell asleep. As soon as the lady saw she was released from his vigilance, she wandered a little way looking round as if to find somebody, seeking behind the rocks and looking up into the trees. On perceiving the travellers, she called to them to come down, and on their refusal to descend from fear of the Genie, she threatened to awake him and deliver them over to him. Branch by branch they descended tremblingly, and when they were by her she invited one to follow her into a dark part of the wood, telling the other to wait till she returned. After a little while she returned and retired with the second, and when she came back she said: 'I see rings upon your fingers; you must each give me a ring, and your ring added to the ninety-eight in this handkerchief will make a hundred. I have sworn to deceive the Genie who keeps me locked in that casket, a hundred times.' Even more than the tale of the two travellers, that of the two men who went by night to a tomb appealed to my imagination, for it was related that they descended a staircase, spread with the rarest carpets, through burning perfumes, to a great tapestried saloon, where lamps were burning as if for a festival. A table was spread with delicate meats and wines. But the feasters were only two—a

young man and woman, now lying side by side on a couch, dead. As soon as the elder man catches sight of the twain he draws off his slipper and slaps the faces of the dead and spits upon them, to the great horror of his companion, who seizes him by the arms, asking why he insults the dead. 'The dead whom you see lying before you are my son and daughter;' whereupon he begins to tell how his son conceived a fatal passion for his sister. 'His passion was unfortunately returned, and, to escape from the world which holds such love in abhorrence, they retired to this dwelling. But even here, you see, the vengeance of God has overtaken them.'

It had seemed to me that the brother and sister had probably lighted a pan of charcoal, choosing to die rather than their love might die before them; and their love, so reprobate that it could only be enjoyed in a tomb, appealed to my perverse mind, prone to sympathize with every revolt against the common law. Each age selects a special sin to protest against, and in the beginning of the nineteenth century it was incest that excited the poetical imagination. Byron loved his half-sister, and Genesis sheltered his Cain. Shelley's poem *Laon and Cythna* was not in print when I was a child, but a note in the edition of Shelley's works that I discovered in my grandfather's library and took to Oscott College with me informed me that *The Revolt of Islam* was a revised version of it—revised by Shelley himself at the instigation of his publisher, who thought that England was not yet ripe for a poem on the subject of the incest of brother and sister. The title *The Revolt of Islam* appealed to my imagination more

than the first title, and connected the story in my mind with the story that I had read in the *Arabian Nights*; and, delighted by the beautiful names of the lovers, I used to allow my thoughts to wander away during class-time, wondering if they loved each other as deeply as the brother and sister that had perished in the tomb, and Marlow—where the poem was written in the ideal company of his mistress, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin—was for ever sanctified in my eyes.

I was as much given to dreaming as to games, and, determined to indulge myself to the top of my bent, I would lean over my desk, a Latin grammar in front of me, my head clasped between my hands, and abandon myself to my imagination. However cold the morning might be, I could kick the world of rule away and pass into one in which all I knew of love was accomplished amid pale yellow, slowly moving tapestries, within fumes of burning perfume: dim forms of lovers, speaking with hushed voices, floated before me, and their stories followed them, woven without effort. I looked forward to the time apportioned out for the learning of our lessons, for it was only then that I could be sure of being able to leave Oscott without fear of interrupting. It was in my mind that I found reality—Oscott and its masters were but a detestable dream. One priest and only one suspected my practice, and he would walk behind me and lay his hand on my shoulder, or rap my skull with his knuckles, rousing me so suddenly that I could not suppress a cry. And then, what agony to look round and find myself in the cold study with an unlearnt lesson before me, and the

certainty in my heart that when I was called to repeat it I should be sent to the Prefect for a flogging for my stupidity or for my idleness, or for both!

One day coming out of the refectory I said to the Prefect, 'I brought a volume of Shelley's poems from home with me. I have been reading it ever since, and have begun to wonder if it is wrong to read his poems, for he denies the existence of God.'

He just asked me to give him the book. The days went by without hearing any more of the volume. It had been sacrificed for nothing, and as soon as the Colonel returned I told him how I had sacrificed my volume of Shelley in the hope of being expelled for introducing an atheistical work into school.

'You see you were in the big division and only rumours of your trouble used to reach me. I remember, however, the row you got into about betting; you used to lay the odds.'

'And once overlaid myself against one horse that had come along in the betting and had to send ten shillings to London to back him. The Prefect gave me the book-maker's letter and asked me to open it in his presence.'

'The prize fight created some little stir.'

'I remember it came off in the band-room, a sovereign a side, but before either was beaten the watch came running up the stairs to announce that the Prefect was going his rounds.'

'You were always in a row of some kind, always in that study place learning Latin lines.'

'Oscott was a vile hole, a reek of priest. Every

kind of priest. I remember one, a tall bald-headed fellow about five-and-thirty who kept me one whole summer afternoon learning and re-learning lines that I knew quite well. Every time I went up to the desk to say them his arm used to droop about my shoulders, and with some endearing phrase he would send me back. We were alone, and I could hear my fellows playing cricket outside. "I must send you back once more," and when I came up again with the lines quite perfect his hand nearly slipped into my trouser pocket. At last the five o'clock bell rang and I was still there with the lines unlearnt. To be revenged on him for keeping me in the whole afternoon, I went to confession and mentioned the circumstance; I was curious to test the secrecy of the confessional. I was quite innocent as to his intentions, and the result of my confession was that a few days afterwards we heard he was leaving Oscott, and a rumour went round the school that he used to ask the boys to his room and give them cake and wine.'

'It doesn't follow that——'

'I know that a Catholic believes that a priest may murder, steal, fornicate, but he will never betray a secret revealed in the confessional. But we won't argue it. Do you remember the little housemaid?'

'I remember hearing that you had discovered a pretty maid-servant among the hideous lot that used to collect in the back benches, and I wondered how you managed to distinguish her looks, for you could only get sight of her by glancing over your shoulder.'

'You were nearly three years younger than I was

at the time, and had not reached the age of puberty; myself and a chosen few used to walk together round the playground, telling each other the adventures that had befallen us during the vacations. Do you remember Frank ——? He was one of my pals and used to have numerous adventures among maid-servants when he went home for the holidays. We could not stand his introductory chapters, long as Sir Walter Scott's, and used to cry, "Begin with the bubbies."'

'But what has this story got to do with the pretty housemaid that you spotted at the back of the chapel?'

'Only this. An innocent question revealed my ignorance of woman, and, fearful lest Frank should tell on me, I spoke of Agnes.'

'Was that her name?'

'I don't know. The name started up in my mind and it seems to me in keeping with my memory of her, a low-sized girl, the shoulders slightly too high, a pointed oval face and demure overshadowed eyes. No one at Oscott had ever looked at a maid-servant before, and in a sudden inspiration I said that I would present Agnes with a bouquet. The project astonished and delighted my companions, and every evening I waited for her at the foot of the stairs leading to the organ-loft. It wouldn't be possible to offer her my bouquet till she came alone, and every day I answered my companions, "No; I didn't get a chance last night." At last my chance came, and, descending the stairs, I offered the girl my flowers, mentioning that they would look well in the bosom of her dress. On another occasion I met her in the

dormitories, but she begged me not to speak to her, for if I did she would be sent away.'

'Is that all?'

'It was the only thing I could think of to break the monotony of the Oscott day; and if I suggest that one of my boon companions may have yielded to scruples of conscience and betrayed me in confession——'

'A Catholic is only obliged to tell the sins he commits himself.'

'By acquiescing in my poor gallantries he may have thought he made himself responsible for them.'

'You very likely talked openly yourself, and——'

'Anything rather than admit that the confessional is used as a means of government. For what else do you think the sacrament was substituted?'

'I was many years at Oscott and never had any reason to suspect that an improper use was made of the confessional.'

'The secret leaked out; all secrets do in Catholic communities, and some great trouble must have arisen, or I should not have written to father.'

'I knew nothing about that.'

'I wrote the miserable little story to him, adding that if the girl were sent away my conscience would leave me no peace, and that I should marry her as soon as I got the opportunity.'

'I had no idea it was so serious.'

'It was mother who told me years after that, on receiving my letter, father ordered one of the grey ponies to be saddled and galloped away to Claremorris to catch the train. I did not think for a minute that my letter would bring him all that way,

and when one of the priests, or deacons, or sub-deacons, or bunkers—do you remember the fellows we used to call the bunkers?'

'Of course I do; the sons of English tradesmen who were educated at Oscott, at our expense, for the priesthood.'

'When one of those cads came up to me in the playground and told me I was wanted in the visitor's room, my heart sank, and I could hardly crawl up the Gothic staircase. I was in an awful funk, for I could not think of father as being anything else but dreadfully angry with me; whereas he was surprisingly gentle, and listened to my foolish story without reproving me. I don't know if you remember father's eyes—clear, blue eyes—they embarrassed me all the while, making me feel a little hypocrite, for I didn't intend to carry out my threat. Even in those times I was just as I have ever been, very provident about my own life, and determined to make the most of it. I was a little hypocrite, for all the time I was cajoling him, I was thinking what my chances were of being taken out to Birmingham and given a dinner at the Queen's Hotel, a meal which I sadly needed. I wish I could remember his words; the sensation of the scene is present in my mind, but as soon as I seek his words they elude me. Northcote came into the room, and I think it became plain to me at once that he had already been speaking to father, and that the girl was not going to be dismissed. You remember Northcote—a great-bellied, big, ugly fellow, whom we used to call the Gorilla. He was almost as hairy, great tufts starting out of his ears and out of his

nostrils; the backs of his hands were covered, and hair grew thickly between the knuckles. I was thinking how cleverly I had escaped a thrashing and of the pleasure in store for me—a long drive with my father in a hansom, and of the dinner in the coffee-room of the Queen's Hotel, when the Gorilla startled me out of my reverie. "George," he said, "has refused to go to confession." At once I felt my father's eyes grow sterner, and my dream at that moment seemed a mirage. "George," he said, "is this true?" "The Prefect told me the other day to go to confession, but I had nothing to confess. He insisted, and when I answered that I'd go to the confessor but I could tell him nothing, he ordered me to his room for a flogging. I said I'd like to see the President about that, and I told Dr. Northcote that I had written to you about the housemaid." And then our father agreed with the Gorilla that there are always sins to confess for him who chooses to look for them, and I remember the Gorilla reminding me that, probably, I had not examined my conscience sufficiently. The authorities are all old coaxers when parents are present.'

'I always liked the Gorilla.'

'Did you? He asked me if my attention had never wandered at Mass? if I had never lost my temper? or been disobedient to my master? or lazy? It was impossible for me to deny that some of these things had happened, and, feeling that I must be truthful if I were to win my father over to my side, I said—and the words slipped out quite easily—"But, Dr. Northcote, I'm not sure that I believe in confession, so why should I be obliged to go to confession?"

The President raised his shaggy eyebrows. "It isn't my fault, and to communicate when in doubt would be——" A very grave look must have come into his face, and a certain gravity stole into my father's, and then, in answer to another question, posed with awful deliberation, I remember saying, and in these very words, "But, Dr. Northcote, you didn't always believe in confession yourself." Dr. Northcote was a convert to Catholicism; he had become a priest at his wife's death, and his son was in my class. Our father turned away from the table and walked towards the window, and I can still see his plump back in shadow and one side whisker showing against the light. The Gorilla hesitated, unable to think of an appropriate answer, and father, as if he divined the priest's embarrassment, returned from the window. But I could see he had been laughing.'

'And did he take you out to Birmingham on that occasion?'

'I think he did, for I remember a conversation about Shelley's poems with him. But he couldn't have taken me out to Birmingham and left you behind.'

'I don't ever remember driving out to Birmingham with father.'

'Not on any occasion?'

'No.'

'How very odd. If the Queen's Hotel still exists I could find the table in the coffee-room at which we used to sit. I remember listening in admiration to father talking to Judge Fitzgerald. All the Fitzgeralds were there.'

'The Fitzgeralds left Oscott together, just before

I went there. One of them wrote a book or verses about the bunkers, and there was a law-suit. I only once remember our father at Oscott, and forget the occasion; but I can still see him giving an exhibition of billiards and showing off some strokes.'

'I don't recollect a billiard-table at Oscott—not in my time. Where was it?'

'A top room where I never was before. You say you remember a conversation with father about Shelley. Did he admire Shelley?'

'Not much, I think. He didn't like *The Pine Forest by the Sea*, for I remember his very words, "Why do you waste time learning bad verses?" He liked the opening lines of *Queen Mab*, "How wonderful is Death, Death and his brother Sleep," and spoke of Byron and quoted some verses from *Sardanapalus* which I thought very fine. I remember him saying to me at the end of a religious argument that out of the many religious reformers Christ was the only one that had declared himself to be God and had been accepted as such by his disciples. A very flimsy proof this seemed to me to be of Christ's divinity, and my admiration of father's intelligence declined from that moment. My admiration for him as a kindly human being increased. Our parting was most affectionate; I don't think that he told me; it must have been the Prefect that told me I was not returning to Oscott after the long vacation. I was not to speak, he said, to any of my schoolmates during the remainder of the term. But rumour was soon busy that I had successfully defied the whole College, and many were the attempts made to speak to me, but I used to shake my head

and smile and pass on. The outcast is never as unhappy as the herd imagines him to be, and these last six weeks of my Oscott life were not disagreeable to me, and the pleasantest moment of all was when I asked the Prefect on the last day of the term for his permission to say good-bye to my schoolfellows. So I left Oscott,' I said to the Colonel, 'in flying colours, at least flying the colours which I wished to fly. A detestable place it was to me, mentally and physically. You only suffered physical cold, hunger, and canings, but I suffered in my mind. I couldn't breathe in Catholicism.'

'You always hated Christianity, especially in its Catholic form.'

'Only in its Catholic form.'

'When you were at Oscott there was no question of your becoming a Protestant?'

'My dear Colonel, I answer you as I answered Edward; one doesn't become a Protestant, one discovers oneself to be a Protestant, and I discovered in those days that magicians and their sacraments estranged me from all religious belief, instead of drawing me closer to it.'

The Colonel smiled sadly.

'We shall get you back one of these days.'

'When I lose my reason, perhaps. I have often wondered at my hatred of Catholicism, so original, so inherent is it. Sometimes I have wondered if it may not be an inheritance of some remote ancestor.'

'Not so very remote,' the Colonel said.

'Why? Weren't we originally a Catholic family?'

'No, it was our great-grandfather at the end of the eighteenth century that changed his religion.'

'So our great-grandfather became a Catholic. He went to Spain, I know that, and made a great fortune and married in Spain; but whom did he marry? A Spaniard?'

'A Miss O'Kelly.'

'An Irishwoman, a Catholic of course? And it was she who persuaded him to change his religion. Theology and sex go together. If there were no sex there would be no theology.'

'Her family,' the Colonel said, 'had been in Spain so long that she was practically a Spaniard.'

'And grandfather was an Agnostic, mother told me, so there is only one generation of pure Catholicism behind me. You don't know how happy you've made me. Your news comes as sweetly as the south wind blowing over the downs.'

XVIII

The Colonel stayed with me a few days longer, and we spent our evenings in such friendly conversation that none would have suspected that a great storm had passed over our heads. And when the morning came for him to go, we bade each other good-bye with *empressement*, a little more than usual, as if to convince ourselves that we loved each other as before; but neither was deceived, and I went up to the drawing-room with a heavy heart.

Miss Gough was waiting there, and she began to read aloud from yesterday's dictation, but her voice was soon drowned in the tumult of my thoughts. 'Of what use for us to see each other if we may only talk of superficial things? Never more can there be

any sympathy of spirit between us. We are solitary beings who may at most exchange words about tenants and saw-mills. How horrible! And while talking of things that do not interest me in the least, there will be always a rancour in my heart. We shall drift farther and farther apart; the fissure will widen into a chasm. We are divided utterly, and sooner or later he will leave Moore Hall and will go to live abroad.' The cessation of Miss Gough's voice awoke me, and looking up I caught sight of her eyes fixed upon me reproachfully.

'You're not listening.'

'I beg your pardon; I've been away. Now we'll go on.'

But the scene of the story I was dictating was laid in Mayo round the shores of Lough Cara, and the woods and the islands and the people whom I had known long ago drew my thoughts from the narrative, and before long they had drifted to a house that my brother and I had built with some planks high up in a beech-tree. One day a quarrel had arisen regarding the building of this house, and to get my own way I had pretended not to believe in his love of me, causing him to burst into tears. His tears provoked my curiosity, and it was not long before I began to think that I would like to see him cry again. But to my surprise and sorrow the gibe did not succeed in producing a single tear. He seemed indifferent whether I thought he loved me or not.

It was after fifty years had gone by that this long-forgotten episode floated up out of the depths.

'I was as detestable in the beginning as I am in the end,' I said, like one speaking in his

sleep; and catching Miss Gough's eyes again, I laughed a little. 'I'm terribly absent-minded this afternoon.'

'You've been working too hard lately, and you didn't go for your walk yesterday.'

'You think it would be better for me to go for a long walk than to sit here dreaming or dictating rubbish? I dare say you're right; I give you your liberty.' She closed her notebook and rose from the table. 'But I don't know where to walk.'

'Why not go to Merrion and call on John Eglinton? You always like talking to him.'

'He's at the Library this afternoon.'

'And there are your cousins at Blackrock.'

'Yes, I might go to see them.'

'Then till to-morrow.'

She went away leaving me stretched in an arm-chair by the window staring at the drooping ash by the wicket, trying to think of some way of passing the time, but unable to discover any except by going into the garden and helping the gardener to collect the large box snails with which the plants were infested. He threw them into a pail of salt and water, saying 'it is fine stuff for them;' but I liked to spill a circle of salt and watch them trying to crawl out of it. Alas! one does not change—not materially. When I was a boy I used to hunt the laundry cats with dogs, but the Colonel was never cruel. 'No one corrected me, no one reproved me; I grew up a wilding . . .' and on this my thoughts dissolved into a meditation on the worthlessness of my own character and my powerlessness to mend it. 'I shall remain what I am

now to the end, and that wouldn't matter so much if——'

The sentence remained unfinished, for at that moment I remembered the intonation in the Colonel's voice: 'It will be a great grief to me if you declare yourself a Protestant.' The words were simple enough, but intonation is more important than words; it goes deeper, like music, to the very roots of feeling, to the heart's core.

'But if I sit here brooding any longer I shall go mad,' and I rushed upstairs and shaved myself, and buttoned myself into a new suit of clothes. 'The apparel oft creates a new man,' I said, stepping briskly over the threshold, hastening my pace down Baggot Street, assuring myself that meditation is impossible when the pace is more than four miles an hour. But at the canal bridge it was necessary to stop, not to watch the boats as is my wont, but to consider which way I should take, for I had gone down Baggot Street and the Pembroke Road, over Ballsbridge, and followed the Dodder to Donnybrook so often that my imagination craved for some new scenery. 'But there is no other,' I cried, and it was not until the trees of the Botanic Gardens came into view that I roused a little out of my despondency. I had never asked for a key, or solicited admission to these gardens, so gloomy did they seem; but thinking that I might meet some student from Trinity whom I could watch while pursuing knowledge from flower to flower, from tree to tree, who might even be kind enough to instruct me a little and divert me, I crossed the tram-line and peered through the tall railings into the dark and

dismal thickets. There did not seem to be anything in these gardens but ilex-trees; 'the most unsuitable tree to my present mood,' I muttered, and went away in the direction of Blackrock, thinking of my handsome cousin Fenella and her good-natured innocent brothers. It seemed to me that I should like to pay them a visit, that their house would soothe me. One likes certain houses, not because the people that live in them are especially clever and amusing, but because one finds it agreeable to be there. But in Mount Merrion questions would be put to me about the Colonel. Mount Merrion would bring all the miserable business up again, and I stopped at the corner of Serpentine Avenue undecided.

'If I could only think of something,' I said; 'anything . . . provided I have not done it a hundred times before. I have never followed the Dodder to the sea!' And wondering how it got there, I turned into Serpentine Avenue. As there was no sign of the river at this side of the railway, I concluded that it must lie on the other side, for all rivers reach the sea unless they go underground. The gates of the level-crossing were closed when I arrived, and a sound of angry voices reached my ears. 'A little group of wayfarers,' I said, 'cursing a gate-keeper in Dublin brogue.' 'Will you come out to Hell ower that. The divil take you, what are you doing in there? Is it asleep you are?' and so forth, until at last an old sluggard rolled out of his box with a dream still in his eyes, and, grumbling, opened the gates, receiving damnations from everybody but me, who was nowise in a hurry.

A passer-by directed me, and I followed a beautiful shady road, admiring the houses with gardens at the back, until I came to a great stone bridge, unfortunately a modern one, but built out of large blocks of fine stone. A black, drain-like river flowed through the arches, for the Dodder is nowhere an attractive river in its passage through Dublin, though it passes through many picturesque places. The woods at Dartry are as picturesque as any, and even at the Landsdowne Road there is a wood and a turnstile, and at the end of the wood a pleasant green bank overhung with hawthorn boughs where I should like to sit and rest were it not facing a black stream inert as a crocodile in its last mile before it soaks past Ringsend into the sea. 'The current moves hardly at all,' I said, 'and my priest would prefer to face a couple of miles of Lough Cara on a moonlight night rather than twenty yards of this river. He would come out on the other side clothed in mud, but out of Lough Cara he would rise like Leander from the Hellespont, but with no Hero to meet him.'

And throwing myself on the green bank, my thoughts began to follow the priest's moods as he wandered round the thickets of Derrinrush—mood rising out of mood and melting into mood. The story seemed to be moving on very smoothly in my imagination, and I know not what chance association of images or ideas led my thoughts away from it and back to the evening when the Colonel had left my house on my telling him that he might as well castrate his children as bring them up Catholics. He had forgiven me my atrocious language, it is true, for the Colonel's beautiful nature can do more than

pardon; he is one of those rare human beings who can forgive. He is unable to acquire new ideas, the old are too intimate and intense; family ties are dear to him, and he is a Catholic because he was taught Catholic prayers when he was a little child and taken to Carnacun Chapel. His life is set in his feelings rather than in his ideas, and he expressed himself fully and perfectly when he said: 'It will be a great grief to me if you declare yourself a Protestant,' and it seemed to me that I should be guilty of a dastardly act if I were to bring grief into my brother's life. 'God knows,' thought I, 'he has received stabs enough from fortune, as do all those whose hearts compel them as his did on Carlisle Bridge, six months ago.' It pleased me to remember the scuffle. We had heard a woman cry out as we returned from a Gaelic League meeting, and looking back I said: 'A Jack cuffing his Jill round a cockle stall, one of the many hundred women that are cuffed nightly in Dublin.' Before I could say a word the Colonel had rushed to her assistance, and a fine old boxing-match began between the cad and the Colonel at one in the morning; and if the cad had happened to have some pals about, the Colonel would certainly have been flung into the Liffey. He did not think of the danger he was running, only of rescuing some oppressed woman.

'A diabolical act it would be to grieve him mortally in the autumn of his life, now that he is settled in Moore Hall in the enjoyment of his first freedom after thirty years of military discipline. I can't do it.' The Colonel did not come into the world, as the saying goes, with a silver spoon in his mouth, and had to make up

his mind before he was twenty how he was to get a living. There was no time for consideration as to the direction in which he would like to develop. If he had had a little money he might have gone to the Bar, and he would have made a good lawyer; but success at the Bar comes after many years. In those days the Army examination was difficult; he was plucked the first time, and was sufficiently pooh-poohed at home, very likely by me who could never pass any examination. He said very little, but his mind concentrated in a fierce determination to get through, and he passed high up. Mother began at the bottom of the list trying to find him, but the housemaid cried out: 'Why he's here, ma'am, ninth!' He was first out of Sandhurst, went to India and was stationed in the Mauritius, and fought in the first South African War.

He returned to India, and was not long at home before he had to go out again to South Africa, where he commanded his regiment through all the fierce fighting of Colenso and Pieter's Hill. He had to risk his life again and again, and submit himself to a coil of duties for thirty years before he had earned sufficient to support a wife and children, and it is outrageous that I, who have enjoyed my life always, never knowing an ache or a want, should dare to intervene and tell him—I could not repeat the atrocious words again. It seemed to me, as I lay on the green bank, that I had no right to declare myself a Protestant. It is bad that the children should see their parents divided in religion; it would aggravate the evil were their uncle to declare himself on their mother's side. But I wonder

why he married a Protestant? Because he was compelled by his heart, and did not meanly stop to consider the value of the sacrifice he was making. 'That is why,' and I got up from the green bank and walked towards the next bridge, wondering how it was that I was never able to bask in the sun like the couples to be seen every fine evening in the Park; rough boys and girls sitting on the benches, their arms about each other, content to lie in the warmth of each other's company without uttering a word, at most, 'Are you comfy, dear?' 'I'm all right.' But I have never been able to enjoy life without thought, and should not have lain on that green bank.

On the other side of the bridge there are no sweet hawthorns, only waste lands, and a ragged path along the water's edge interrupted by stiles; at the third bridge this path ceases altogether; warehouses and factories rise up steeply; the Dodder cannot be followed to the sea by that bank; but a flight of steps exists on the other side, and these took me down to a black cindery place intersected by canals. It was amusing to trip across several lock gates and to find oneself suddenly on the quays. But where was the Dodder? To re-cross the lock gates and go up that flight of steps would be tiresome, and I decided to miss the honour of discovering the mouth of that river, and give my attention to a great four-master, the hull of the ship standing thirty feet out of the water, and all the spars and yards and ropes delicate yet clear upon the grey sky.

But there seemed to be nobody about to whom I could apply for permission to visit the ship, and my choice lay between continuing my walk regretfully along the quays or going up the gangway uninvited and explaining to the first sailor that my intentions were strictly honest. 'There must be somebody on board; the ship wouldn't be left unprotected,' and up the gangway I went. But the ship seemed as empty as the shells that used to lie along the mantelpieces in the 'sixties, and I walked about for a long time before happening upon anybody. At last a simple, good-natured Breton sailor appeared whom I had no difficulty in engaging in conversation. He told me that the ship had come from Australia with corn and would go away in ballast, first to Glasgow, and if the wind were favourable they would get to Glasgow in about eighteen hours. The ship's next destination was San Francisco, and to get there they would have to double Cape Horn, and I thought of the sailor ordered aloft to take in sail. He would have to cling to the ropes, however black the night might be, however the vessel might heave from billow to billow, and if the ship doubled the Cape in safety he would be up among the yards furling sail after sail as she floated through the Golden Gates. At San Francisco they would take in corn and—

'*En dix-huit mois nous serons revenus avec du blé.*'

'*Et après ?*'

'*Alors je reverrai ma patrie et mon fils,*' and he took me into a little closet and showed me his son's photograph. And when I had admired the young man, he asked me if I would like to go over the

ship, and we walked about together, but there was nothing to see . . . only a number of bonhams.

'*Voilà le manger des matelots.*'

'*Pas pour nous, monsieur. C'est le capitaine et les officiers qui mangent le porc frais.*'

'*Vous êtes Breton, mais vous parlez bien Français; peut-être encore mieux que le Breton.*'

'*Non pas, monsieur; je suis du Finistère, une des provinces où on parle Breton.*'

The sailor revived my ardour for the preservation of small languages, and we talked enthusiastically of the Bretons, the remnant of the race that had once possessed all France and colonized Britain. The Irish Celts were a different race, and spoke a language that he would not understand; but he would understand some Welsh, and the Cornish language better still. . . .

'*La dernière personne qui parlait le Cornouailles fu. une vieille femme, morte il y a cent ans. On sait son nom, mais pour le moment . . .*'

'*Vous ne vous le rappelez pas, monsieur?*'

'*N'importe. Cela ne vous semble pas drôle d'entendre les syllabes celtiques lorsque vous grimpez sur la vergue du perroquet dix ou douze mètres au-dessus des mers houleuses du Cap Horn?*'

'*Non, monsieur, puisque je travaille avec mes compatriotes.*'

'*Bien sûr, bien sûr; vous êtes tous Bretons.*'

And, slipping a shilling into his hand, I pursued my way along the quays, stopping to admire the cut-stone front of a house in ruins; its pillared gateway and iron railings seemed to tell that this indigent riverside had seen better days. Behind it was a

little purlieu overflowing with children, and a few odd trades were esconced amid the ruins of warehouses. A little farther on I came upon a tavern, a resort of sailors. It looked as if some wild scenes might happen there of an evening, but very likely the crews from the fishing-smacks only came up to play a game of cards and get a little tipsy—nowadays the end of an Irishman's adventure. We are supposed to be a most romantic and adventurous race, and very likely we were centuries ago; but we are now the smuggest and the most prosaic people in the world; our spiritual adventures are limited to going to Mass, and our enjoyment to a race meeting. A mild climate, without an accent upon it, does not breed adventurers. Quay followed quay. There were plenty of fishing smacks in the Liffey, and these interested me till I came to Carlisle Bridge; and leaning over the parapet, my thoughts followed the Liffey beyond Chapelizod. It is between Chapelizod and Lucan that it begins to gurgle alongside of high hedges through a flat country enclosed by a line of blue hills about seven or eight miles distant; after Chapelizod it is a brown and bonny river, that would have inspired the Celt to write poetry if he had not preferred priests to the muses. As I said just now, he is supposed to be romantic and adventurous, but he is the smuggest and most prosaic fellow in the world. As Edward says, men in Dublin do not burn. The Celt is supposed to be humorous, but he is merely loquacious. We read of Celtic glamour, but what is known as Celtic glamour came out of Sussex. Shelley came to Ireland to redeem the Celt. What a mad freak that was! as mad as

mine, or very nearly. But he got some beautiful poetry out of Ireland:

> 'The oak
> Expanding its immeasurable arms,
> Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
> Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
> Most solemn domes within, and far below,
> Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
> The ash and the acacia floating hang
> Tremulous and pale.'

And those lines:

> 'A well,
> Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
> Images all the woven boughs above,
> And each depending leaf, and every speck
> Of azure sky . . .'

are very like Lucan; and there are other passages still more like Lucan. But unable to capture the elusive lines, my thoughts followed the river as far as I knew it, as far as Blessington, to Poulaphouca. '*Phuca*' is a fairy in Irish, and no doubt the fairies assembled there long ago; but they have hidden themselves far away among the hills, between the source of the Liffey and the Dodder. When O'Grady wrote 'the divine Dodder,' he must have been thinking of long ago, when the Dodder roared down from the hills, a great and terrible river, sweeping the cattle out of the fields, killing even its otters, wearing through the land a great chasm, now often dry save for a peevish trickle which, after many weeks of rain, swells into a harmless flood and falls over the great weir at Tallaght, but only to run away quickly or collect into pools among great boulders, reaching Rathfarnham a quiet and demure little river. At Dartry it flows through mud, but the wood above it

is beautiful; not great and noble as the wood at Pangbourne; Dartry is a small place, no doubt, but the trees that crowd the banks are tall and shapely, and along one bank there is a rich growth of cow-parsley and hemlock, and there are sedges and flags and beds of wild forget-me-nots in the stream itself. The trees reach over the stream, and there are pleasant spots under the hawthorns in the meadows where the lovers may sit hand in hand, and nooks under the high banks where they can lie conscious of each other and of the soft summer evening. A man should go there with a girl, for the intrusion of the mere wayfarer is resented. There is a beautiful bend in the stream near the dye-works, and the trees grow straight and tall, and out of them the wood-pigeon clatters. Green, slimy, stenchy at Donnybrook, at Ballsbridge the Dodder reminds one of a steep, ill-paven street into which many wash-tubs have been emptied; and after Ballsbridge, it reaches the sea; as has been said, black and inert as a crocodile.

If O'Grady had called the Dodder 'the Union river,' he would have described it better, for the Dodder must have been entirely disassociated from Dublin till about a hundred years ago. The aristocracy that inhabited the great squares and streets in the north side of Dublin could have known very little about this river; but as soon as the Union became an established fact, Dublin showed a tendency to move towards the south-east, towards the Dodder. Every other city in the world moves westward, but we are an odd people, and Dublin is as odd as ourselves. . . . The building of Merrion

Square must have been undertaken a little before, or very soon after the Union; Stephen's Green is late eighteenth century; Fitzwilliam Square looks like 1850. The houses in the Pembroke Road seem a little older, but we cannot date them earlier than 1820. Within the memory of man, Donnybrook was a little village lying outside Dublin; to-day it is only connected with Dublin by a long, straggling street; and beyond Donnybrook is a beautifully wooded district through which the Stillorgan Road rises in gentle ascents, sycamores, beeches, and chestnuts of great height and size shadowing it mile after mile. On either side of the roadway there are cut-stone gateways; the smooth drives curve and disappear behind hollies and cedars, and we often catch sight of the blue hills between the trees.

'At this moment,' I said, 'the transparent leaves are shining like emeralds set in filigree gold; the fruit has fallen from the branches, the shucks are broken, boys are picking out the red-brown nuts for hacking. And the same sun is lighting up the chestnut avenue leading to the Moat House. Stella's shadow lengthens down her garden walk. She would like me to startle her solitude with my voice. Why not?' And, while watching her in imagination lifting the pots off the dahlias and shaking the earwigs out, the thought shot through my heart that I might not be able to bear the disgrace of Catholicism for the Colonel's sake, causing me to quail and to sink as if I had been struck by a knife.

'It has begun all over again,' I said, 'and all the evening it will take me unawares as it did just now. It will return again and again to con-

quer me in the end . . . or at every assault the temptation may be less vehement. Go home I cannot. Distraction is what I need—company. I'll go to Stella, and we will walk round the garden together; she will enjoy showing me her carnations and dahlias, teasing me because I cannot remember the name of every trivial weed. I suppose it is that men don't care for flowers as women do; we never come back from the country our arms filled with flowers. We are interested in dogmas; they in flowers. A mother never turned her daughter out of doors because she could not believe in the doctrine of the Atonement. They are without a theological sense, thank God! We shall linger by the moat watching the trout darting to and fro, thinking of nothing but the trout, and after supper we'll stray into the painting-room and go over all the canvases, talking of quality, values, and drawing. And then ——'

But she may not be at home; she may have gone to Rathfarnham in search of subjects; she may have gone to Sligo; she spoke last week of going there to stay with friends. To find the Moat House empty and to have to come back and spend the evening alone, would be very disappointing, and I walked up and down the bridge wondering if I should risk it. 'All my life long I shall have to bear the brand of Catholicism. I shall never escape from my promise except by breaking it,' and forgetful of Stella, I followed the pavement, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, lost in surprise at my own lack of power to keep my promise. 'Sooner or later I shall yield to the temptation, so why not at once? But it may pass away.

Stella will be able to advise me better than anybody,' and I fell to thinking how she had been the refuge whither I could run ever since I had come to Ireland, sure of finding comfort and wise counsel.

'Car!'

XIX

'She is quite right,' I said to myself, as I took a seat under the apple-tree by the table laid for dinner under the great bough—'she is quite right. It is the only way out of the difficulty. If I wouldn't grieve my brother, I must leave Ireland. And it would be well to spread the news, for as soon as everybody knows that I'm going, I shall be free to stay as long as I please. Æ will miss me and John Eglinton; Yeats will bear up manfully, Longworth will miss me. I shall miss them all. . . . But are they my kin? And if not, who are my kin? Steer, Tonks, Sickert, Dujardin—why enumerate? Ah, here is he who cast his spell over me from across the seas and keeps me here for some great purpose, else why am I here?'

'The warm hour prompted you, Æ, to look through the hawthorns.'

'It was the whiteness of the cloth that caught my eye.'

'And you were surprised to see the table laid under the apple-tree in this late season? But the only change is an hour less of light than a month ago; the evenings are as dry as they were in July; no dew falls; so I consulted Teresa, who never opposes my wishes—her only virtue. Here she comes

across the sward with lamps; and we shall dine in the midst of mystery. My fear is that the mystery may be deepened suddenly by the going out of the lamps. Teresa is not very capable, but I keep her for her amiability and her conversation behind my chair when I dine alone. . . . Teresa, are you sure you've wound the lamps; you've seen the oil flowing over the rim?' She assured me that she had. 'You cannot have seen anything of the kind, Teresa. The lamps have clearly not been wound.' The wicket slammed. 'Whoever this may be, Æ, do you entertain him. I must give my attention to this lamp. It wouldn't be pleasant to find ourselves suddenly in the dark. It is you, John Eglinton? Well, I'm engaged with this lamp. You see, Teresa, the oil is rising; give me a match. . . . Teresa and Moderator Lamps are incompatible. But next year I shall devise some system of arboreal illumination.'

'Next year! But to-day I heard, and on the fullest authority, that you're thinking of leaving us.'

'Who has been tittle-tattling in the Library this afternoon?'

'I wasn't in the Library this afternoon; so it must have been yesterday that I overheard some conversation as it passed through the turnstile.'

'But you aren't thinking of leaving us?' Æ asked.

'Not to-morrow, nor the day after, nor next year; I can't leave till the end of my lease . . . and by then you'll have had enough of me; don't you think so?'

'You're not really thinking of leaving us?'

'The only foundation for the rumour is, that I mentioned to a lady the other day that I didn't look

upon Ireland as the end of my earthly adventure. And she must have told one of her neighbours. Twenty-four hours are all that is required for news to reach the National Library.' John's face darkened. The National Library should not be spoken of as a house of gossip, even in joke.

'But you'll never find elsewhere a house as suitable to your pictures, as beautiful a garden to walk in, or friends as appreciative of your conversation. You'll not find a finer intelligence than Yeats' in London, or John Eglinton's.'

'I quite agree with you, Æ, that I shall never chance on a more agreeable circle of friends. And all of you are so necessary to me that I am heart-broken when I think that the day will come sooner or later when——'

'I should like to hear what Æ stands for in your mind. Can you tell us?'

'He makes me feel at times that the thither side is not dark but dusk, and that an invisible hand weaves a thread of destiny through the uniform woof of life. He makes me feel that our friendship was begun in some anterior existence.'

'And will be continued——'

'Perhaps, Æ. How conscious he is of his own eternity!' I said, turning to John Eglinton.

'Yet you are leaving us.'

'How insistent he is, John! And yet, for all we know, he may be the first to leave us. He has certain knowledge of different incarnations. The first was in India, the second in Persia, his third, of which he keeps a distinct memory, happened in Egypt. About Babylon I am not so sure.' But

Æ dislikes irreverence, especially a light treatment of his ideas, and I did not dare to add that in Heaven he is known as Albar, but asked him instead if he were redeemed from the task of earning his daily bread, would he retire to Bengal and spend the rest of his life translating the Sacred Books of the East. His answer to this interesting question we shall never know, for, yielding to the impulse of a sudden conviction, John Eglinton interjected:

'If Æ leaves Dublin it will not be for Bengal but for Ross's Point, formerly haunted by Manaanan MacLir and the Dagda, and now the Palestine of an interesting heresy known as Ætheism.'

At the end of our laughter Æ said:

'Now, will you tell us what idea John Eglinton stands for?'

'He and you are opposite poles,' I answered. 'You stand for belief, John Eglinton for unbelief. On one side of me sits the Great Everything, and on the other the Great Nothing.'

'And which would you prefer that death should reveal to you?' John Eglinton asked. 'Nothing or Everything? . . . You don't answer. Admit that you would just as lief that death discovered Nothing.'

'It is easy to imagine a return to the darkness out of which we came—out of which I came; and difficult to imagine my life in the grey dusk that Æ's eyes have revealed to me. But since you deny the worth of this life——'

'I do not deny,' John Eglinton answered.

'Yes, by your abstinence from your prose you deny the value of your life. He doubts everything,

Æ—the future of Ireland, the value of literature, even the value of his own beautiful prose. Watch the frown coming into his face! I am forgetting—we mustn't speak of a collected edition of his works lest we spoil for him the taste of that melon.'

'Who else is coming to dinner?' John Eglinton asked.

'Conan said he would come, and he will turn up probably in the middle of dinner, pleading that he missed his train.'

'Let us hear what idea Conan stands for,' said John Eglinton.

'An invisible hand introduces a special thread into the woof which we must follow or perish, and as we stand with girt loins a peal of laughter often causes us to hesitate.'

'Laughter behind the veil,' said John, and he spoke to me of a poem that he had received from Conan for publication in *Dana*. He had it in his pocket, and would be glad if I would say how it struck me. 'Only two stanzas, hardly longer than a Limerick.' But the poem could not be found among the bundle of papers he drew from his pocket, and when he gave up the search definitely, Æ said:

'I'm going to write the myth of your appearance and evanishment from Dublin, Moore; the legend of a Phooka who appeared some years ago, and the young people crowded about him and he smelted them in the fires of fierce heresies, and petrified them with tales of frigid immoralities, and anybody who wilted from the heat the Phooka flung from him, and anybody who was petrified, he broke in

twain and flung aside as of no use, and at last only four stood the test: Æolius, because he was an artist and was enchanted with the performances of the Phooka; Johannes also remained, because he was of a contrairy disposition and was only happy when contrairy or contradicting, and the Phooka gave him the time of his life. There was Olius, who was naturally more ribald than the Phooka, and had nothing to learn in blasphemy from him, but undertook to complete his education; and there was Ernestius, who practised Law, and could not be brow-beat; and to these four the Phooka revealed his true being.'

'You'll write that little pastoral for the next number of *Dana*, won't you, Æ? We're short of an article.'

'When I find the true reason of the Phooka's sudden disappearance, I'll write it.'

'You mean that you would like me to tell you the true reason. But is there a true reason for anything? There are a hundred reasons why I should not remain in Ireland always.' And then, it being impossible for me to resist Æ's eyes, I said: 'Well, the immediate reason is the Colonel, who says it will be a great grief to him if I declare myself a Protestant.'

'But you aren't thinking of doing any such thing? You can't,' said John Eglinton. As I was about to answer Æ interrupted:

'But I never thought of the Colonel as a Catholic. I used to know him very well some years ago, and I always looked upon him as an Agnostic.'

'He may have been in his youth, like others; but he is sinking into Catholicism. The last time he

came to Dublin we quarrelled, and I thought for ever, on account of what I said to him about his children. Don't ask me, Æ, to repeat what I said; it would be too painful, and I wish to forget the words. We shall never be the same friends as we were once, but we are still friends. I succeeded in persuading him to stop a few days longer, and during those days, while trying to avoid all religious questions, we fell to talking of family history, and he mentioned, accidentally of course, that my family isn't a Catholic family, that it was my great-grandfather that 'verted—my grandfather wasn't a Catholic, but my father was, more or less, in his old age. I assure you the news that there was only one generation of Catholicism behind me came as sweetly as the south wind blowing over the downs, and I said at once I should like to declare myself a Protestant. It was then that he answered that it would be a great grief to him if I did so. I shouldn't so much mind grieving him in so good a cause if I hadn't used words that drove him out of the house. My dilemma was most painful—to bear the shame of being considered a Catholic all my life or—— so I consulted a friend of mine in whom I have great confidence, and she said: "If you can't remain in Ireland without declaring yourself a Protestant, and wouldn't grieve your brother, you had better leave Ireland."'

'But were you in earnest when you told your brother you'd like to declare yourself a Protestant?' John Eglinton asked.

'I don't joke on such subjects.'

'What means did you propose to take? A letter to the *Times*?'

'I had thought of that and of a lecture, but decided that the first step to take would be to write to the Archbishop.'

'But the Archbishop would ask if you believed in a great many things which you don't believe in.'

'Everything can be explained. I take it for granted that, being a man of the world, he would not press me to say that I believed in the resurrection of the body. St. Paul didn't believe in it. I can cite you text after text——'

'We're not in disagreement with you; but we're thinking whether Dr. Peacock will accept your interpretation of the texts.'

'You think that the Archbishop would ask me to accept the bodily resurrection of Christ?'

'I'm afraid,' said John Eglinton, 'that you'll have to accept both body and spirit.'

'I hadn't foreseen these difficulties. Æ tried to prove to me that I should stay in Ireland, and now you are providing me with excellent reasons for leaving.'

'It's only contrairy John that's talking,' said Æ in his most dulcet tones. 'You'll never leave us.'

'Well, I've told you, Æ, that I can't leave till the end of my lease. My dear Æ, sufficient for the day, or for the evening, I should have said. I see Teresa and the gardener coming down the greensward, and soon the refreshing odour of pea soup will arise through the branches. Now, the question is, whether we shall eat the melon with salt and pepper before the soup, or reserve it till the end of dinner and eat it with sugar. But where's Conan? Teresa, will you kindly walk across and ask——'

The wicket clanged, and we watched the author of most of the great Limericks coming towards us.

'There was a young man of St. John's,' I cried.

'My masterpiece . . . it was always popular,' he added, dropping his voice, as Yeats does when he is complimented on *Innisfree*. 'It was always popular, and from the first. But you remind me of a tale of long ago—not the Trinity, though there are bread and wine by you. I am thinking of some Latin poet—it is Moore that puts the story into my head—a Latin poet banished to the Pontic seas—Ovid sitting with his friends.'

'So you've heard the news?'

'I have heard no news, none since my parlour-maid burst into my study with the news that the lamps were lighted in the garden and that the company were at table; and what better news could I hear than that?'

'You haven't heard that Moore is leaving us?'

'Leaving us! I hope his friend Sir Thornley Stoker hasn't discovered anything very special in Liffey Street. He has been up and down there many times lately on the trail of a Sheraton side-board, and Naylor has been asked to keep it till an appendicitis should turn up. The Chinese Chippendale mirror over the drawing-room chimney-piece originated in an unsuccessful operation for cancer; the Aubusson carpet in the back drawing-room represents a hernia; the Renaissance bronze on the landing a set of gall-stones; the Ming Cloisonnée a floating kidney; the Buhl cabinet his opinion on an enlarged liver; and Lady Stoker's

jewels a series of small operations performed over a term of years.'

We broke into laughter; 'he is very amusing,' Æ whispered; and at the end of our laughter I explained that Sir Thornley was supreme in the suburbs of art; but as soon as he attempted to storm the citadel, to buy pictures, he was as helpless as an old housewife.

'How many Sir Joshuas and Gainsboroughs have I saved him from!'

'If he ever sells his collection I suppose it will fetch a great deal of money.'

'It never will be sold in his lifetime, John, but at his death there will be a great auction. The terms of the will are explicit, arranging not only for his own departure but for the departure of the curiosities. Wound in an old Florentine brocade, he will be laid in a second-hand coffin, 1 B.C., and driven to Mount Jerome; and on the same evening the curiosities will leave for England, Naylor, Sir Thornley's chief agent, accompanying them to Kingstown; and standing at the end of the pier, two yards of crêpe floating from his hat like a gonfalon, and a Renaissance wand in his hand, his sighs will fill the sails of the parting ship, without, however, his tears sensibly increasing the volume of the rising tide, and when the last speck disappears over the horizon he will fall suddenly forward.'

'But for what feat of surgery did a grateful patient send him the second-hand coffin?'

Conan continued to pile imagination upon imagination until the conversation drifted back to

the point from which it had started. Had I really made up my mind to leave Dublin?

'My dear Conan, if you'll stop talking Moore will tell you why he conceives himself to be under an obligation to leave us.'

'I'm sure I beg pardon. I didn't believe in the possibility of losing you till you're carried to the woods in Kiltoom, the spot mentioned in the chapter of *The Lake* which you read to us last Saturday under this tree.'

'It's only this, Conan, that John Eglinton heard in the National Library——'

'Well, of course, if it was heard in the National Library——' and Conan went off into a peal of laughter, bringing a dark and perplexed look into John's eyes.

'Well, Conan, if you want to hear why I thought of leaving Ireland, not to-day or to-morrow, but eventually, I'll tell you, but I must not be interrupted again. Æ and John Eglinton, who have no Catholic relations, will have some difficulty in understanding me, but you'll understand, and they will understand, too, when I remind them that at Tillyra years ago dear Edward insisted on my making my dinner off the egg instead of the chicken, and on going to Mass on Sunday. He is interested, and so exclusively, in his own soul that he regards mine, when I am visiting him, as essential to the upkeep of his. Now, I can't help thinking that if I remain in Ireland and were to fall dangerously ill at Tillyra, the spiritual tyranny of years ago might be revived in a more serious form. His anxiety about his soul would force him to bring a Catholic priest to my

bedside, and if this were to happen, and I failed to yell out in the holy man's ear when he bent over me to hear my confession "To hell with the Pope," the rumour would go forth that I died fortified by the rites of the Holy Catholic Church.'

'But you aren't leaving us because you think you're going to die at Tillyra, and that Edward will bring a priest to your bedside?'

'No, that would be hardly a sufficient reason for leaving my friends; but I confess that I should like to die in a Protestant country among my co-religionists.'

'Moore is thinking of declaring himself a Protestant.'

'The Colonel has said that it would be a great grief to him if I were to do so; but you'll excuse me, Conan, if I don't stop to explain, for I notice that Æ hasn't touched his fish, and that Teresa has begun to despair of being able to attract his attention to the lobster sauce. Æ, I shall be obliged to ask everybody present to cease talking, so that you may eat your fish. The spirit in you must have acquired a great command over the flesh for that turbot not to tempt you. It tastes to me as if it had only just come out of the sea. A capon follows the turbot, the whole of our dinner; but have no fear, the bird is one of the finest, weighing nearly five pounds.'

'What beneficent Providence led it into such excesses of fat?' cried Conan. 'It neither delved, nor span, nor wasted its tissues in vain flirtation; a little operation released it from all feminine trouble, and allowed it to spend its days in attaining a glory to which Moore, with all his literature, will never

attain—the glory of fat capon.' At the end of our laughter, Conan cried: 'The unlabouring brood of the coop. You know Yeats's line, "The unlabouring brood of the skies?" For a long time I thought that Yeats was referring to the priests, but he must have been thinking of capons; no, he knows nothing of capons. He must have been thinking of the stars.

"Oh, songless bird, far sweeter than the rose!
And virgin as a parish priest, God knows!"'

Fearing that Conan's jests might scandalize the gardener, and remembering that there was only white wine on the table, I sent him to the house to fetch the red wine, that we might drink it with the chicken. Teresa could remain, for she had told me she had not been to her duties for many a year, and I had come to look upon her as one of my sheaves.

'A more fragrant bird was never carved, and I beg of you, Æ, to eat the wing that the Gods have given you. He lived and died for us, and should not be eaten thirsty. Here is the gardener with the wine that comes to me from Bordeaux in barrels—a pleasant, sound dinner wine. I don't press it upon you as a vintage wine, but I am told that it is by no means disgraceful. You see I am dependent upon others, only knowing *vin ordinaire* from *Château Lafitte* because of my preference for the former. I warrant that the innocent nuns up there, now all abed, wondering why the lights are burning in my garden, are better wine-bibbers than anybody at this table, except perhaps Conan. All a-row in their cells they lie, wondering what impiety

their neighbour is organizing. I suppose you have all heard the report that I have re-established the worship of Venus in this garden, bringing flowers to her statue every morning?'

'Perhaps they think these lamps are an illumination in her honour,' Æ suggested.

'Causing them to look into their mirrors oftener than the rule allows. There was a time when I liked to stand at my back window and watch them following winding walks under beautiful trees, while their neighbours, the washerwomen, blasphemed over their wash-tubs. The contrast between the slum and the convent garden, separated by a nine-inch wall, used to amuse me; but now I take no further interest in my nuns, not since they have put up that horrible red-brick building—an examination hall or music-room——'

'Spoiling excellent material for kitchen-maids,' said Conan.

'Be that as it may, the most doleful sounds of harp and violin come through the window, spoiling my meditations. In Dublin there is no escape from the religious. If I walk to Carlisle Bridge to take a car to the Moat House I meet seminarists all along the pavement, groups of threes and fours; and full-blown priests flaunt past me—rosy-cheeked, pompous men, dangling gold watch-chains across their paunches, and tipping silk hats over their benign brows——'

'Their vulpine brows,' Conan said.

'A black queue stretching right across Dublin, from Drumcondra along the Merrion Road. The other day a particularly aggressive priest walked step for step with me as far as Sydney Parade, and it seemed to me that when I altered my pace he

altered his. I was going on to see John Eglinton, and no sooner had I outstepped the priest than the great wall of the convent confronted me. I wonder where all the money comes from?'

'Out of Purgatory's bank,' Conan answered cheerfully; 'and there is no fear of them overdrawing their account, for money is always dribbling in. Nothing thrives in Ireland like a convent, a public-house, and a race-meeting. Any small house will do for a beginning; a poor box is put in the wall, a couple of blind girls are taken in, and so salubrious is our climate that the nuns find themselves in five years in a Georgian house situated in the middle of a beautiful park. The convent whose music distracts your meditations, is occupied by Loreto nuns—a teaching order, where the daughters of Dublin shopkeepers are sure of acquiring a nice accent in French and English. St. Vincent's Hospital, at the corner, is run by nuns who employ trained nurses to tend the sick. The eyes of the modern nun may not look under the bed-clothes; the medieval nun had no such scruples. Our neighbourhood is a little overdone in convents; the north side is still richer. But let's count what we have around us: two in Leeson Street, one in Baggot Street and a training college, one in Ballsbridge, two in Donnybrook, one in Ranelagh; there is a convent at Sandymount, and then there is John Eglinton's convent at Merrion; there is another in Booterstown. Stillorgan Road is still free from them; but I hear that a foreign order is watching the beautiful residences on the right and left, and as soon as one comes into the market—— You have been hawking,

my dear Moore, and I appeal to you that the hen bird is much stronger, fiercer, swifter than the——'

'The tiercel.'

'The tiercel, of course, for while he was pursuing some quarry at Blackrock, the larger and the stronger birds, the Sister of Mercy and the Sister of the Sacred Heart struck down Mount Annville, Milltown, and Linden. All the same, the little tiercel has managed to secure Stillorgan Castle on the adjacent hillside, a home for lunatic gentlemen, most of them Dublin publicans.'

'Like my neighbour Cunningham, who only just escaped incarceration.'

'His was a very tragic story,' said John Eglinton. 'Did you never suspect him of being a bit queer?'

'It did often seem odd not to exchange a good-morning from doorstep to doorstep, and always to go off without ever looking my way. But his old housekeeper was affable enough; she used to bid me a kindly greeting when I returned home after a short absence in the West, and she must have gossiped with my servants, for some of the mystery with which he surrounded himself vanished. I certainly did hear from somebody that his rule was never to have a bite or sup outside his own house; it must have been my cook who told me, and now I come to think of it she added, somewhat contemptuously, that he dined in the middle of the day and went out for his walk at three o'clock.

'As the clock struck he sallied forth, a most laughable and absurd little man, not more than two inches over five feet; a long, thick body was set on the shortest possible legs, and he was always dressed

the same, in a yellow overcoat and wide grey trousers not unlike dear Edward's. It would be an exaggeration to say that Cunningham was one of the sights of Dublin when he rolled down the pavement for his walk with a thick stick in his hand, a corpulent cigar between his teeth, a white flower in his button-hole. He was one of the minor sights of Dublin as he went away towards the Phœnix Park, a jolly little fellow to the casual observer, but to me, who saw him every day, his good humour seemed superficial and to overlie a deep-set melancholy.'

'The melancholy of the dwarf,' Conan said under his breath.

'His walk was always up the main road of the Phœnix Park, as far as Castleknock Gate and back again, and I think his old housekeeper told Miss Gough that he wouldn't miss his walk for the King of England. You asked me if I knew him; I never saw anybody more determined not to make my acquaintance. When we passed each other in the street he always averted his eyes, and if I had been polite I should have imitated him, but I could not keep myself from looking into his comical eyes turned up at the corners, and wondering at the great roll of flesh from ear to ear, and at the chins descending step by step into his bosom. It was from Sir Thornley Stoker that I learnt how determined he was not to make my acquaintance. "You can't guess," he said one day, "whom I have let out of the room? Your next-door neighbour, Cunningham. I begged him to stay to meet you, but it was impossible to persuade him. He said, 'Oh, no, I won't meet George"'; and on Sir Thornley pressing

him to give a reason, he refused, urging as an excuse that I was an enemy of the Church. But I think myself that he was afraid I would put into print some of the stories that he used to tell against the priests. He had stories about everybody, even about me. That very afternoon Sir Thornley could hardly speak for laughing. "If you had only heard him just now telling——" "But tell me what it was." "I can't tell you. It's the Dublin accent and the Dublin dialect. It was all about *Evelyn Innes*. You don't know what you've missed," and he turned over in his chair to laugh again. "No, there's no use my trying to tell it; you should hear Cunningham." "But I can't hear Cunningham; he won't know me." At last apologizing for spoiling the story, Sir Thornley told me that I must take for granted the racy description of two workmen who had come to Upper Ely Place to mend the drains in front of my house. After having dug a hole, they took a seat at either end, and sat spitting into it from time to time in solemn silence, until at last one said to the other, "Do you know the fellow that lives in the house forninst us? You don't? Well, I'll tell you who he is: he's the fellow that wrote *Evelyn Innes*." "And who was she?" "She was a great opera-singer. And the story is all about the ould hat. She was lying on a crimson sofa with mother-of-pearl legs when the baronet came into the room, his eyes jumping out of his head and he as hot as be damned. Without as much as a good-morrow, he jumped down on his knees alongside of her, and the next chapter is in Italy."

"The crimson sofa with the mother-of-pearl legs,"

and the baronet "as hot as be damned," would be about as much of your story as a Dublin workman would be likely to gather from the book,' John Eglinton said.

'The touch that *Evelyn Innes* is all about the old hat is excellent,' Conan added, and then became grave like a dog that licks his lips after a savoury morsel. And, continuing, I told them how, in the last three months before his death, we all noticed a great change in Cunningham; his face turned the colour of lead, and the old housekeeper used to talk to Miss Gough about him, not saying much, expressing her alarm as old women do, with a shake of the head. One day she said the master had gone very queer lately, that he would sit for hours brooding, not saying a word to anybody; and it was about three weeks after that she rushed into our house distracted, wringing her hands, speaking incoherently, telling us that, not finding her master in his bedroom when she took him up his cup of tea, she had gone to seek him in the closet, and not finding him there, she had rushed up to the top landing. 'He was after hanging himself from the banisters,' she wailed, 'and I sent for the police and for his solicitor and sat on the stairs till they came. No one will ever know what he suffered. Didn't I tell Miss Gough that he would sit for hours, and he not saying a word to anyone? He must have been thinking of it all that time, and little did I understand him when he said—many and many's the time he said it as he went upstairs to bed: "They'll never get me as long as I've got this right hand on my body."'

'I don't know if the tragedy transpires in my tell-

ing, but what I see is a retired publican overcome by scruples of conscience, his failing brain filled with memories of how he had beguiled customers with stories about the clergy into drinking more than was good for them. A man of that kind would very soon begin to believe that the allies of the clergy, the demons, were after him, and that he could only save himself by giving all his money for Masses for the repose of his soul. And that is what he did. It all went in Masses, or nearly all; the relations got a very small part, after threatening to contest the will. But what interests me is the agony of mind that he must have suffered week in, week out, repeating, "They'll never get me as long as I've got this right hand on my body." The phrase must have run in the old housekeeper's head, and somebody, seeing that his mind was giving way and fearing lest he might kill himself, may have said to him: "You had better put yourself under restraint." His adviser may have suggested John of God's, and this advice, though well-meant, may, perhaps, have destroyed what remained of his poor mind. "They'll never get me as long as I've got this right hand on my body." It was with that phrase he went up to bed one evening and hanged himself next morning from the banisters with a leather strap. Miss Gough met him coming home the evening before he killed himself, and she tells me that she'll never forget the look in his face. Have you ever seen a maniac, and the cunning look out of the corner of the eyes which says: "Now you think you're going to get the best of me, but you aren't." She remembers noticing that look in his face as he passed her, his two hands thrust into the

pockets of his short overcoat. He was bringing home the strap, for the old woman said at the inquest that he had bought it that evening. I suppose he was hiding it under his overcoat. I wonder why he waited till early next morning before hanging himself. Poor little man! That strap was the great romance of his life.'

The phrase jarred a little. No one answered, and then his voice hardly breaking the silence, John Eglinton spoke of a tragedy that occurred almost under his own windows, the barred windows of an old coaching inn, at the end of a little avenue of elm-trees, down at Merrion, overlooking the great park in which the convent stands. A nun had been found drowned, whether by her companions or by the gardener was not related in the newspapers—merely the fact that she had been found in the pond one morning. It was stated at the inquest that the nun was a sleep-walker, and the verdict returned was one of accidental death. The verdict of suicide in a moment of temporary insanity would not have been agreeable to the nuns, but to me, a teller of tales, it is more interesting to think that she had gone down in the night to escape from some thought, some fear, some suffering that could be endured no longer. She was free to leave the convent; the bars that restrained her were not iron bars, but they were not less secure for that. She may have suffered, like Cunningham, from scruples of conscience, and gone down in despair to the pond.

'And while you were dressing yourself to go to the National Library, she was floating among water-weeds and flowers.'

'Moore is thinking of Millais's *Ophelia*,' said Æ.

'Yes, and I was thinking of *Evelyn Innes*. The most literary end for her would be to have drowned herself in the fish-pond.'

'I'm sorry it didn't occur to you.'

'It did occur to me many times, and I could see and hear the nuns coming down in the morning and finding her floating.'

'A body doesn't float,' Æ said, 'till nine days after. He can't shake himself free from the memory of *Ophelia*.'

Conan, who had been left out of the conversation for a long time, was getting irritated, and he jumped into it as an athlete jumps into the arena.

'Moore is wondering what thought, what fear, what scruple of conscience may have sent her down to that pond, as if it were not quite obvious what drove her down there. She was in love with John, who would not listen to her, and one night, finding that he had put bars on his window, she walked towards the pond, as Moore would say, like one overtaken by an irreparable catastrophe.'

Æ and I laughed. John looked a little puzzled and a little vexed, as he always does at any illusion to himself. The wicket-gate clanged, and Teresa came across the greensward, saying, 'Please, sir, you're wanted on the telephone,' and Conan disappeared quickly into the darkness.

We all wished—or perhaps it would be more exact if I said that I wished—to discuss Conan now that he had left us, and, seeking for some natural transition, I watched a moth buzzing round the globe of the lamp, and thought of the desire of

the moth for the star. Conan would be able to repeat the poem, but that transition would be too obvious. It was the moon that gave me one—the yellow sickle rising on a leaden sky among the arches and chimneys of the convent.

'We have heard what Conan thinks of the nuns; now I wonder what the nuns would think of Conan?'

Æ spoke of his reckless imagination and his power of perceiving distant analogies, connecting the capon and the priests with Yeats's line, 'The unlabouring brood of the skies'; and, better still, the house of symbols, the antique coffin, and the disconsolate dealer standing at the end of Kingstown Pier watching the furniture departing under a smoke pall.

'I wonder what he will become?'

'I was much struck,' John Eglinton said, 'at Meyer's prophecy. Do you remember it? He said that he had known many young men like Conan, all very defiant until they were thirty; and every one, after thirty, had developed into commonplace fathers of families, renowned for all the virtues.'

'I wonder will that be the end of Conan?'

A deep silence followed, and then, half to myself and half to my companions, I said:

'Do you think he has shaken himself free from Catholic superstitions?'

John Eglinton was not sure that he had done this.

'Merely telling stories about the avarice of priests is not sufficient; one must think oneself out of it, and I'm not sure that Meyer isn't right. Catholics

are Agnostic in youth, quiescent in middle age, crawthumpers between fifty and sixty.'

Then we began to talk, as all Irishmen do, of what Ireland was, what she is, and what she is becoming.

'There is no becoming in Ireland,' I answered; 'she is always the same—a great inert mass of superstition.'

'Home Rule,' said Æ, 'will set free a flood of intelligence.'

'And perhaps the parish priest will drown in this flood.'

Æ did not think this necessary.

'Do you think the flood of intelligence will penetrate into the convents and release the poor women wasting their lives?'

'I'm not thinking of nuns,' John Eglinton said; 'those who have gone into convents had better remain in them; and Home Rule will be of no avail unless somebody comes with it, like Fox or like Bunyan, bringing the Bible or writing a book like the *Pilgrim's Progress*—— Moore is too much of a toff.'

'The Messiah will not wear the appearance that you expect him to wear. Salvation always comes from an unexpected quarter. It may come from Æ, it may come from me, it may come from you.'

John laughed scornfully at the idea that he should bring anybody anything.

'It was against my advice, John, that you named your magazine after the goddess; you should have called it *The Heretic*.'

'You are quite right, Æ. We want heresy in Ireland, for there can be no religious thought with-

out heresy. Spain declined as soon as she rid herself of her heretics, if one can call Mohammedanism a heresy; at least, it was a competitive religion; the persecution of the Protestants in France was followed by the expulsion of the Jesuits and the confiscation of their lands. No country can afford to be without heretics, and, in view of the tendency of Catholic countries to rid themselves of their clergy, wouldn't it be a good thing for the Irish Bishops to send Logue to the Vatican so that he might explain to His Holiness the necessity of Protestantism? "You needn't look further than Ireland for an apt illustration, holy Father. If, on the passing of the Home Rule Bill, we are set to work to persecute the Protestant minority, the terrible fate of exile may be mine. We must look ahead, holy Father."'

'Logue may beg His Holiness to withdraw the *Ne Temere* decree,' said John Eglinton.

'I wouldn't advise Logue to be too explicit. The decree can be politely ignored by the Irish Bishops. When a Catholic girl who is going to marry a Protestant approaches the priest to learn in what religion her children shall be brought up, he will answer her: "In the religion of your husband." "But my husband is a Protestant." "My dear daughter, we do not know if he'll remain a Protestant; we rely on you to use every effort to persuade him from the errors of Protestantism, so that your children may be brought up in our Holy Church." And to the young man who wishes to marry a Protestant girl the priest will say: "Your children will be brought up in the religion of their mother." "But their mother is a Protestant." "We do not know, my

dear son, that your wife will remain a Protestant; if you will do all in your power to bring her into the one true fold, I am confident that you'll succeed."'

'The idea is an ingenious one,' said John Eglinton, and Teresa came across the sward to tell me that Mr. Osborne, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Longworth, Mr. Seumas O'Sullivan, Mr. Atkinson, and Mr. Yeats, were waiting in the dining-room.

'Will you have coffee in the house or out here, sir?'

'We had better have it in the house. The table has to be cleared. And Teresa, please place a lamp at the wicket, for if you don't you'll certainly break my dessert service and hurt yourself. Come, Æ, I've got a cigar for you that I think will please you, and afterwards you can smoke your pipe.'

XX

'In what part of London do you think of settling?' John Eglinton asked, as we passed out of the Library.

'I haven't given the matter a thought,' I answered.

The fireman accosted John in the vestibule, and we waited till the last stragglers had passed out and the great doors were closed.

'Would you care for a walk down the Pembroke Road and back by Northumberland Road over the canal bridge before going to bed?'

'Of course I should; I haven't been out all day, but——'

'You're tired?'

'No, I'm not tired,' and, hoping that he would not speak again of my departure from Ireland, we stepped out together, the lie that I had told him reverberating all the while unpleasantly, awaking in my memory every sentence of the letter which I had written to Tonks asking him to look out for a house for me.

He had written telling me that Steer was looking forward to seeing me again, and that together they had found a house that would suit me in Swan Walk; but it would be well if I would come over to see it at once, for it was just one of those houses that would not remain long without a tenant. 'Of course I'll go,' I had said to myself moving towards the writing-table. But no sooner had I reached it than an unaccountable apathy seized me, and after a short struggle with myself the writing of the letter was postponed till next morning; but next morning, when I thought of it, I turned hurriedly to my own writings. And this had happened again and again, until my reluctance to answer Tonks' letter suggested the possibility that my subconscious self desired to go and live in Paris. Whereupon I had written to Dujardin, who is always looking forward to seeing me in an *appartement* in Paris where we could continue our theological discussions till one in the morning, pulling all the while at our cigars. The dear man must have put himself to some trouble, for he had discovered an *appartement* in which I could hang all my pictures, five or six vast rooms on the Boulevard St. Germain, and the rent only four thousand francs a year. Again I had gone to the writing-table, with the intention of writing that I would go over at the end

of the week; but on picking up the pen I had experienced the same unaccountable apathy. I could not write to my landlord telling him that I intended to give up my house at the end of my lease. And I went out every evening brooding on Rome and Canterbury . . . There are past moments that come up with the sensual conviction of a present moment; and one of these is a dark September night at the corner of the Appian Way. I must have come through the Clyde Road admiring, as I passed, the tall pillared porticoes which give the villas a certain elegance, and the lofty trees, elms, beeches, dense chestnuts, and dark hollies, amid which the villas stand. In my humour it was a sort of solace to stop and to remember Auteuil. The Rue de Ranelagh exists, doesn't it? *Elle donne sur la rue de l'Assomption n'est-ce pas?* Some such random association of names may have caused me to keep to the left in the direction of Upper Leeson Street, or it may have been that I kept on that way because the Tyrrells used to live there; now they are in Clonskeagh. I am aware of that dark September night at the corner of the Appian Way as I am of the moment I am now living; the sky grey above the trees, and a sycamore leaf fluttering down from a great bough to my feet, and myself, yielding to a vague feeling of apprehension, stepping aside to avoid treading on it, and it was immediately after that the temptation rose again, coming up as it were out of my very bowels; yet the temptation was not of a woman or any part of a woman, but a desire to enter the Irish Church in the sense of identifying myself with it.

Hitherto my desire had been merely to disassociate myself from a Church which I deemed shameful, whereas I was now conscious of a desire of unity with a Church in sympathy with my religious aspirations . . . to some extent. But I had promised the Colonel not to declare myself a Protestant, meaning thereby that I would not write to the papers on the subject, nor call Dublin together to hear a lecture on the incompatibility of Literature and Dogma. 'But my promise to the Colonel,' I said, 'keeps me out of St. Patrick's every Sunday. For me to be seen there would be equivalent to a declaration of Protestantism. This is a great privation, for I like to go to church occasionally and to pray with the congregation. To whom I know not, but I pray. . . .'

A little later in the evening I found myself standing before a tall iron gate peering through the bars, admiring some golden tassels. 'Golden rod,' I said, 'and the borders, I am sure, are blue with lobelia.' A sudden scent of honey warned me that arabis was there in plenty, and I walked on, thinking of a dense cushion of pure white flowers, till my steps were again stayed, and this time it was by the sight of—— It seemed like a quince, but the quince does not bear beautiful pink and white blossoms, bell-shaped blossoms like the azalea, only larger. The blossom is more like a mallow than an azalea . . . Is it fair of the Colonel to ask me to leave this beautiful place?' I came upon another garden-gate overhung with syringa. Its flowering season was long over, but I remembered how sweetly it had perfumed the whole neighbourhood two months ago.

Our belief in the existence of God and of heaven and of hell may drop from us, but we never lose our belief that a destiny is leading us by the hand; and it was on my way home from Clonskeagh that I asked myself if it were because destiny claimed my allegiance to the Irish Church that I found myself unable to leave Dublin. The explanation was more acceptable to me than the stupid superstition that Cathleen ni Houlihan had bewitched me again; and next day, in the middle of a dictation, I stopped, overcome by the temptation to declare myself a Protestant. . . . John Eglinton had said that the Archbishop would have me believe in the resurrection of the body. Again I became despondent, and it seemed for two or three days that my difficulties could not be disentangled.

A letter came one morning, and I said: 'This is an invitation to stay with friends in England.' To my great surprise, it required no effort on my part to write a note accepting the invitation and to post it, nor did I experience any difficulty in telling my servant that my clothes were to be packed. A car took me in the morning without accident to the North Wall; I stepped on board the steamer, and it moved away from the quay so easily that I believed no longer in destiny.

'The woof of life,' I said, 'is merely a tangle, and our imagination deceives us when we think that we perceive any design in it.'

The friends I was going to see live in an English village grouped round a church, and a few days afterwards the parson asked me to read the Lessons for him. The hard names caused me some apprehen-

sion, but I continued in a clear voice, and after lunch, when the parson and I went for a walk together, he thanked me and hoped that while I remained at —— I would be kind enough to read the Lessons for him. He had to take three services every Sunday, and it was necessary for him to save his voice as much as possible.

In the course of our conversation I soon discovered him to be an excellent scholar, and we spoke about Oxford, about the advantage of a classical education, about Elizabethan English and how well it had served Andrew Lang in his translation of the *Odyssey*. The old man won my confidence, and I told him I had always felt Roman superstitions to be a low form of paganism, and did not believe Romanism to be compatible with civilization. He seemed to think this an exaggerated statement, but I explained that England had never been a Catholic country at any time, the English Church having always been an independent Church, and this was proved by the fact that England was always in trouble with Rome, from Henry II.'s time onward until Henry VIII. finally cut the knot. Elizabeth had tied another knot which we hoped would never be undone. Nor could France be looked upon as a Catholic country. The Reformation had been stamped out only after many massacres, and these massacres had created an independent spirit.

'Literature, my dear sir, has always been Agnostic in France; only Spain and Ireland can be looked upon as truly Catholic.'

This excellent man asked me to his house, and I spent some delightful evenings with him, discuss-

ing the questions that were near our intellects and our hearts, while his wife sewed on the other side of the fireplace; and every Sunday I read the Lessons for him, and when I returned to Ireland at the end of the month I brought back with me a superficial, but sincere, admiration of the language of our Bible and a fixed determination to read it, from Genesis to Revelation.

I approached the Bible in a twofold spirit—as a man of letters and as one interested in religious problems—and found Genesis to be a collection of beautiful folk-tales, less subtle, less cultured than the Greek, a rougher and more primitive art. A rocky landscape, indeed, is Genesis, with here and there a few palm-trees and a rivulet, and in the distance the patriarchs moving their flocks onwards. A cruel and barbarous people their folk-lore exhibits them to be, with but one instinct—that of race preservation. 'Never did a people believe in the race they belong to as firmly as these Hebrews,' I said, after reading how the daughters of Lot, finding themselves alone with their father, without hope of other men, engage to make him drunken so that they may lie with him, turn and turn about, and the excuses they give for their incest is that they must do this so that they may preserve the seed of their father. And this belief in the importance of the preservation of the race seems to have been the sole morality of the Hebrews. It transpires again in the story of Abraham and Sarah. Sarah, Abraham's wife and half-sister, bare him no children, and feeling that before all things the race must be preserved, she said to him: 'I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I

may obtain children by her.' Ishmael is born, but as soon as Sarah has conceived Isaac, she turns Hagar and her son Ishmael into the wilderness with a bottle of water and a loaf of bread. When the Lord commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the poor boy is laid upon the sacrificial rock, and the Lord, wishing to try his servant, does not stay his servant's hand until the last moment. The staying of the hand at the last moment read to me like an emendation introduced into the text at some later period, and my suspicions were confirmed by certain passages in Kings and Judges. But my attention was distracted from the ancient rites of the Israelites by a story crueller than any I had hitherto read. A Levite went up from Mount Ephraim to Bethlehem-Judah to bring back a concubine who had played the whore against him and then gone to live in her father's house. The damsel's father persuades the Levite to remain five days, and at the end of five days he departs with his concubine, resting in Gibeah, where he can find no one to give him shelter for the night except an old man whom he meets coming from his work in the fields. That night, as they are making their hearts merry, certain sons of Belial beset the house and call on the old man to bring forth the stranger so that they may know him. And the old man goes out of the house and says to them, 'Nay, my brethren; nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you;

but unto this man do not so vile a thing.' But the men would not hearken unto him; so the man took his concubine and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning, and when the day began to spring they let her go.

'Then came the woman in the dawning of the day and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way; and behold! the woman, his concubine, was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. And he said unto her: "Up, and let us be going." But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up and gat him unto his place. And when he was come into his house he took a knife and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.'

In the Book of Samuel we come upon a story of rape and incest which it would be difficult to match —the story of Tamar and her brother Amnon, the son of David. The poor girl after violation is turned out of the house. She says to Amnon: 'This evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.' But he would not hearken to her, and she returned desolate to Absalom's house. Absalom never forgave his brother for this crime; and after two years he persuades David to allow Amnon to accompany him to Baal-hazor for sheep-shearing, and it is there that he orders his servants to kill Amnon.

'It is lucky,' I said, 'that morals are not dependent upon literature, for if they were we should still be as the Hebrews;' and I thought for a long time of the enormous circulation of this book.

As a child I used to hear my father speak of the Book of Job. He used to quote a verse in which God spoke out of the whirlwind, and I still remember my perplexity, for it was difficult for me at that time to understand why this phrase should be considered more beautiful than the many beautiful things I had read in Shelley's *Prometheus;* and when I came to read the story I was disappointed to find it little more than a crude folk-tale, which various rhetoricians had striven to lift into tragedy, and not by developing the human motive of purification by suffering as Tourguéneff would have done, but by overlaying it with rhetoric. If I dare to criticize a story that all the world admires, it is because it seems to me that the Hebrew rhetorician appears for the first time in Job. He fails to win my sympathy, and the most I can do is to admit him to be a man of disordered genius, who screams out everything that comes into his head, caring not at all for composition, or even for sequence in his phrases. His intention is to coerce and to frighten, and if now and then he blasts out a striking phrase, it is peradventure.

And they that rewrote the Book of Job also wrote the Psalms. The method and the intention are the same—to coerce and to frighten. It is true that occasionally the Psalmist desired to sing something, but he never seems to have made up his mind clearly as to what he wanted to sing. He seems to have always preferred the roar of his heart's disquiet

to composition, and it often happened to me to lay my Bible aside so that I might wonder more easily why the ordinary reader should like this literature better than any other. The ordinary reader demands some sort of sequence, and is not very liable to be taken by the beauty of a phrase; nor can it be averred that an occasional beautiful phrase makes good literature. A gipsy following his mood on his fiddle may hit on a fine phrase, but he is not a great musician for that.

To make a long story short, my quarrel with all this literature is the absence of piano passages.

But the disquiet of the Psalmist is not difficult to understand. He lives in terror of a God, a jealous, revengeful God, always ready to destroy, a God that gave 'his people also unto the sword and was wroth with his inheritance.' The fire we are told 'consumed their young men, and their maidens were not given in marriage; their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation.' And when all this was done 'The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a giant refreshed with wine, he smote his enemies in the hinder parts and put them to a perpetual shame.'

After Proverbs comes Ecclesiastes, a beautiful Agnostic work in which God for the first time in the Bible seems to get the worst of it; he recedes into the background; over him, too, a fate seems to hang, and were it not for this book, it might well be that I had not continued the Bible into Isaiah. And for all the profit I have gotten out of this prophet he might have been passed over. Almost at once did I begin to read that 'the day of the Lord cometh to lay the

land desolate and to destroy sinners out of it; that the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give light, and that the earth shall be removed out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and be chased as a roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up;' and that everyone that is found 'shall be thrust through, and everyone that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword, that their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes, their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.' Isaiah, like the Psalmist, always speaks at the top of his voice: 'Moab shall howl for Moab; everyone shall howl.' 'Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl ye inhabitants of the isle.' And the Psalmist continues to howl without a single piano passage, until his howl is taken up by Jeremiah, whose howls are shriller than any in literature. Jeremiah howls in and out of season, until at last he is thrown into a well, and I confess that I despaired when he was drawn out of it, for I knew that he would continue his Lamentations as before . . . and he did.

Ezekiel follows Jeremiah, and, tempted by the picturesqueness of his name, I cast my eyes down the narrative of a vision in which four winged creatures appear out of fire and flame, whose wings were joined one to another, and they had hands under their wings. After these came the Lord who commanded his prophet to go to the children of Israel that had rebelled against him, and so that he might be able to speak to them the prophet was given a roll of a book which was written within and without and told to eat it. He did eat it, little thinking of the next course the Lord had prepared

for him. He was to do this that and the other thing, and finally the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of the House of Israel and of the House of Judah and commanded him to drink water by measure and to eat it as barley cakes and to bake it with 'the dung that cometh out of man'; whereupon the prophet implores mercy, and the merciful God allows his prophet to spread his bread with cow-dung instead.

'The filthiest God that ever came out of Asia,' I said, and, throwing down the book, walked out of the house, feeling that I could not stand a moment longer the reek of sacrifice and the howls of Dervishes. My garden seemed too small and confined, and I rushed away to Stephen's Green, the Dublin mountains being so far away that my mood would have passed, and daylight too, before I reached them. 'The Green must suffice,' I said, and turned into it, glad to see again the brimming lake. The reader remembers it curving like a wonderful piece of caligraphy among the lawns, flowing about, and found again in many backwaters where the ducks preen themselves and resent any intrusion on their privacy, going away as if they were real wild ducks, with a rush of wings and querulous quackings. They will not desert their beloved lake, where they should be happy if anything in the world is happy, but will alight somewhere near the island, under the high shores, where the river tumbles over high rocks. It was beguiled from underground, and somewhere near where I am standing it bubbles away in a moist and sedgy corner, no doubt satisfied with all the great show it has made for us during its brief visit above ground.

But though soothed in a measure by the loveliness

of the evening on the quiet lake, it was impossible to forget the terrible God, which we have accepted, throwing out our own fair Divinities to make way for him, a God that seems to be getting crueller as he gets older. 'Now he has a hell,' I said, 'where demons baste the buttocks of those who refuse to adore him.' That such a father should have had such a son! The willows dipped their leaves in the quiet water, and the great elms whispered their secret in my ear as I went in search of the humble hawthorns—dour little trees, not remarkable for height of stem or length of branch.

On my way to them I came upon foreign trees, but they had no word of comfort for me; and I turned to the birch that bent over the waterfall, graceful as a naiad. And my reverie over, I admired the geese grazing persistently, undeterred by the failing light and the ducks climbing out of the water. Some had put their heads under their wings—'which serves them for bedclothes,' I said. After a brief doze a head would reappear, the duck would look round, a little vexed, seeing that it was not yet night, and I began to wonder if the gulls had gone away to Howth and Bray Head, or if they roosted among the clefts over against the waterfall or in the caves of the isle. The sparrows were shrilling in the hawthorns—their trees—when suddenly an infinite and furious flock rose out of the branches, unable to bear the company of some intolerable companion. A moon, pale and shapeless, appeared in the southern sky, and soon afterwards the star that leads all things homeward—the lamb to the ewe and the child to its mother. Sappho saw and heard these

natural sights and sounds, and sang them three thousand years ago. A glade opened up before me, and I crossed it, meeting at the other end Ernest Longworth, the young man that had entertained me at the banquet at the Shelbourne Hotel with many diverting anecdotes.

He had estranged my sympathies after the ice-pudding by some remark regarding the literary value of the Irish language; and the estrangement had become more marked after a certain speech delivered in some disused chambers. Lady Gregory had invited some young men from Trinity to hear Yeats speak about art and the mission of the artist. 'One mustn't think only of oneself, but of the next generation,' she said to Hughes, Walter Osborne and myself, and we had sat down to listen resignedly to the usual luscious talk that the mission of the artist is to create beautiful things—'Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother'—and when this had gone on for about half an hour and the poet had sat down, Lady Gregory had called on Ernest to continue the discussion. He had done so as well as another; his talk was no worse nor better than what one hears on these occasions, and it was foolish of me to be angry with him, and to keep him at a distance for many months; I might have gone on depriving myself of the pleasure of his entertaining and instructive companionship for ever if a few words spoken at the corner of the street had not revealed the immensity of my mistake to me. That evening at the corner of Hume Street we became friends, and the evening in the Green he appeared to me to be the very companion that I had been seeking all my life.

After the first few casual remarks I knew he would be sure to ask me what I had been writing or what I had been reading.

'I have been reading the Bible,' I said, 'for the last week or ten days, giving the Book more attention than I have ever given to any book before. At the present moment, however, I feel like never opening the Book again. I got as far as Ezekiel,' and I told him the disgusting anecdote that sent me out of the house in search of fresh air.

'You've been shocked, I can see, by certain incidents of a kind——'

'Always the same kind, nothing else. At this moment I cannot think of a single noble action recorded.'

'You would if you weren't so indignant. It seems to me that you have only seen one thing in the Bible —the brutality——'

'Of the filthiest of people, without art or science or anything to recommend them.'

'You overlook the fact, if I may be allowed to say so, that the Bible is something more than a theological work. It is a history of a race which developed, as no other race has done, a sense of life in its most important aspect.

'Solomon had to send to Tyre for workmen to build his temple.'

'Very likely he had. The genius of the Jewish race did not find expression in the arts and sciences, but in morals.'

'Morals!'

'The Bible is a rule of conduct.'

'Good God! What paradox is this, Ernest? This

evening you are exceeding yourself. Go on, I beseech you. Conduct of life! Murder, rape, sodomy, incest. Heavens! Go on. Conduct of life!'

'You mistake certain incidents related in the Bible for the teaching of the Bible. The idea is not mine, but Matthew Arnold's. It was he who pointed out that, while the genius of the Greeks was to aim at and to attain, perfect beauty in sculpture and literature, while they had in an especial degree the sense for science and art, the Hebrews had the sense for conduct and righteousness. The law of righteousness was the main concern of their thinking, of their literature. Their idea of a God may have been—doubtless was—primitive and barbarous, but Israel at no time lost his sense of the connection between conduct and happiness. If you have read the Book of Ezra, you have seen that the life of a Hebrew is laid down there from the cradle to the grave.'

'A race without statues, or literature, or original music.'

'It may be that conduct does not tend to produce great art.'

'Perhaps the Hebrew paid too dearly for his survival.'

'That is another question. You'd better read Arnold's book.'

'No; his prose is much too Rugby for me. But I like his idea; there seems to be something in it. The feeling that one is mad, or all the rest of the world is mad, is not altogether pleasant. Has he anything to say about the New Testament?'

'Yes; I think his theory is that the Old Testament is conduct, and the New conduct touched with emotion. But it is fifteen years since I saw the book.'

XXI

'Are you free this evening? You might come home with me, and we'll talk the matter out.'

He was dining with the Tyrrells, and I went home alone to try to discover what he meant when he said that the Gospels were conduct touched with emotion. 'That the Bible is a book of conduct is arguable,' I said; 'all the prophets, the greater and the lesser, are moralists — vulgar, uncouth, if you will, but moralists in a sense that the Greeks were never, and the commercial idea of Western Europe needed an explicit code, for the Bible and commerce go hand-in-hand among Protestants as well as among Jews, and wherever the Catholic Church has become dominant, and set itself above the Bible and abolished the Bible, the industrial and commercial civilization has decayed, Belgium being a tiny exception to the rule; even Catholicism cannot invalidate the advantages of a port like Antwerp.'

But what did Ernest mean when he said that the New Testament was conduct touched with emotion? It was too late to go to the National Library to look up Arnold's essay, and in vain did I turn the words over and over. It was not until midnight that it occurred to me to read the Gospels themselves. The Sermon on the Mount revealed Arnold's meaning to me. He meant that the Psalmist was insufficiently

endowed with literary expression; he had been trying for centuries to say 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' but the idea had remained rudimentary until Christ came. I continued to read, my ravishment increasing at every sentence, until, weary with too much emotion, I had to lay the Book aside, asking myself, as I fell back in my chair, how it was that I had remained so long stuck in the belief that Christianity had brought nothing into the world but chastity and melancholia.

'How ignorant are our teachers!' I muttered. 'How little do they understand what they teach!' and I grew indignant at the wrongs that had been done and are still being done, the tacking on of things that do not belong to Christianity, and the neglecting of the essential, the great literary art of its Founder. The story of the Passion is beautiful, but it would not have captured men's minds without Christ's own words. 'A Divine artist, whether God or man,' I said, 'and I know an artist when I meet him.'

After this little outburst I turned to the Book again and read on, my admiration deepening always, till at last I began to feel that before going to bed I must go and tell it to somebody. Æ was away on his holidays, painting in Donegal; John Eglinton was sleeping quietly in his bed over against the convent; Best is only moderately interested in literature; he is too completely absorbed in the affixed pronoun, and I walked about the room, asking myself how much I would give that night for assuagement in somebody's intellectual arms. 'I must do something,' I said, 'or I shall not close my eyes

to-night. But what can I do? I can't go to Merrion Square and deliver an oration; there would be nobody to listen to me but the policeman, and he might take me to the station.'

A vehement desire finds an outlet always, and suddenly I felt myself propelled to my writing-table to write to the Archbishop, 'who, after all,' I said, 'is the right person, the person whose business it is to hear me. A simple statement is the best. We shall be able to go into particulars afterwards.'

'YOUR GRACE,

'For the last three years, since I came to live in Ireland, my thoughts have been directed towards religion, and I have come to see that Christianity in its purest form is to be found in the Anglican rather than in the Church of Rome. I am anxious to become a member of your Church, and shall be glad to hear from your Grace regarding the steps I am to take.'

And before the directed envelope I stood, trying to collect my thoughts sufficiently to decide whether I should take my letter to His Grace's house and drop it into his box myself, or post it in the pillar. 'It should come to him through the post,' I said, and after posting it walked home much relieved.

The Bible lay on the table. 'No, I'll not read it again—not to-night.' Next morning after breakfast my thoughts went at once to the Book, and by midday many spurious passages had been discovered, for instance, that very commonplace, reeking-of-Bishop, passage: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this

rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,'—a passage so obviously needful for the founding of a Church that the policeman round the corner, if one were to bring him in, would say, 'Well, sir, it doesn't look much like the genuine article, do it? We'd call it "fake" up at the station.' Yes, of course, fake—and the most blatant 'fake.' It was necessary to have Christ's authority for an apostolic succession and the right to collect money, to lay down the law, to judge others—all the things that Christ expressly declared should not be done; and in my indignation I compared the ordinary Christians, who accept this piece of ecclesiasticism as Christ's words, to the artistic people we meet every day who admire equally Botticelli, Burne-Jones, Corot, Sir Alfred East, Tourguéneff, and Mrs. Humphry Ward. 'The common man,' I said, 'makes the same mess of pottage out of religion as he does out of art.'

This sad thought caused me to drop into a long meditation, and I remembered, on awaking, that the passage from Matthew, the utility of which the policeman round the corner could not fail to see, had been improved upon by the Bishop who wrote about one hundred and fifty years after the Crucifixion. The need for a more explicit text than the one from Matthew had begun to be felt, and the Bishop supplied, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained.'

And, so disturbed was I by the retouching of the text by ecclesiastics that I resolved to compile for my own use and benefit a list of the authentic sayings, and, calling Miss Gough, I dictated them to her, adding as a little appendix all the words that had obviously been inserted by the Fathers; for instance, 'Be not angry with thy brother without just cause.'

'"Without just cause" degrades Christ. These three words turn him into a reasonable and commonplace person. It will be interesting, Miss Gough—won't it?—to have the Archbishop's opinion upon these texts when I go to the Palace.'

I had expected a letter from Dr. Peacock by return of post, and not receiving one, it seemed to me that the interval could not be better employed than by looking into the Acts. The first words that fixed my attention were the words of the beginning of the fifth chapter: 'But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.' Whether Peter was ever Bishop of Rome is a matter on which ecclesiastical authorities are undecided, but there can be no doubt that he was, and is, and ever will be, Parish Priest in the county

of Galway. 'Stephen was stoned in the streets of Jerusalem, and Paul standing by,' I said, and rushed on to the story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. It was not, however, until Paul bade good-bye to his disciples and friends at Ephesus that he won all my admiration and instinctive sympathy. In this most beautiful farewell, one of the most moving and touching things in literature, Paul takes us to his bosom; two thousand years cannot separate us—we become one with Paul and glorify God in him.

And these noble verses are not Paul's single contribution to the Acts; he is so evident in these narratives of adventure that it is difficult to imagine how they came to be attributed to Luke. The narrative of the shipwreck and the journey to Rome could only have been written by a man of literary genius, and there are never two at the same time. The trial at Cæsarea is Paul's own rendering of his defence. Of course it is, and I wondered how anyone could have entertained, even for a moment, the notion that Luke 'made it up.' How did he make it up? From hearsay? Blind men and deaf knowing nothing of the art of writing! Luke may have edited Paul's manuscripts, and his recension may be the farewell at Ephesus, the trial at Cæsarea, and the journey to Rome. But it is certain that Paul's voice, and no other voice, is heard in these narratives; and it is a voice that is always recognizable from every other voice. We do not hear it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor do we hear it in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, a chapter which I have no hesitation whatever in taking from Paul and

attributing to a disciple of John's. But I do not know if any other exegetist has rejected this chapter. Many have rejected the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the first and second Colossians, but it seems to me that I hear Paul's voice in all of these. The Archbishop will no doubt be surprised that I should admit so much. All will go well if he doesn't press upon me the Epistle to the Hebrews. John Eglinton has warned me that I shall be asked to accept the resurrection of the body, and if this dogma is pressed upon me, I shall have to answer: 'I'm afraid, Your Grace, it is impossible for me to go further than Paul, who isn't very explicit on this point.'

The postman's knock startled me. He brought the long-wished-for letter, and it was treasured for many years, but it has been unfortunately lost and a hiatus occurs in my narrative which it is only possible for me to fill up inadequately. He began his letter by explaining that he was staying at the seaside with his family, and there had been some delay at the Palace in forwarding my letter. It was a great joy to him to hear that my coming to Ireland had been the means of leading me back to Christ; and he admitted, I think, that there might be many little points which he would be able to clear up for me, but as he was not returning to Dublin for some weeks the most natural course, he said, was to send my letter to my parish priest: the Reverend Gilbert Mahaffy would call upon me.

It would be unreasonable to expect him to leave his family and come to Dublin to engage in a Biblical discussion with a neophyte. All the same it was a

disappointment to have to discuss certain important points with my 'parish priest' instead of with the Archbishop himself. The words 'parish priest' always seemed to me to savour of Rome. His letter slipped from my fingers, and I sat for a long time thinking of what this Archbishop was like. His name conveyed the idea of a tall, formal man, and perhaps the interview that I had desired, a cosy talk, our chairs drawn up to the fire, would not have happened. I am sure it would have been a very stiff and formal affair, myself and the Archbishop on either side of a mahogany table covered with papers and piles of letters held together by elastic bands. So what did happen was perhaps the best of all happenings. I had always desired to make the Reverend Gilbert Mahaffy's acquaintance. We had been neighbours for a long time; the Rectory was No. 13, Ely Place, one door from the great iron gateway that divides my little cul-de-sac from Ely Place; and he was known to me as a man of the very kindliest disposition. Gill often told me in our walks of his work among the poor, of his effusive enthusiasm and energy. 'A rare soul,' I had often said as he passed me on his charitable errands, absorbed in his thoughts, his short legs moving so quickly under the long frock-coat buttoned to the chin, that he seemed to be running. I could recall the high shoulders showing straight and pointed, the wide head shaded by the soft felt hat, the large straight nose, the cheeks and chin covered with a soft greying beard and the kindly eyes—'Eyes,' I said, 'that always seem to be on the lookout for somebody's trouble.'

Gilbert Mahaffy's appearance had appealed to me, winning me before a word had been exchanged between us; all the same, I was conscious of a little resentment. He had never called upon me; he looked the other way when we passed in the street, treating me exactly like poor Cunningham. It seemed to me that he should have called upon me when I came to Dublin first, and not waited for the Archbishop to tell him to call. However, there it was; he was coming to see me. And taking up the New Testament once more, I fell to thinking what his literary and critical qualifications were. A good man he certainly is, but from his appearance one would hardly credit him with a subtle mind; and a subtle mind seemed to be necessary . . . in my case. We are safe if we admit that Jesus was God and was sent by his Father into the world to atone by his death on the Cross for the sins of men. But Jesus in his own words seems to deny the enormous pretensions that the ecclesiastics would cast upon him. In Matthew he says, 'Why do you call me good? None is good but God,' and no less striking words were uttered by him on the Cross: 'My God, why hast thou abandoned me?' The Colonel had once reminded me that Jesus had said, 'Before Moses was I was,' but these Orientals spoke in images, and it is easy to understand that we all were before Moses, that is to say, before Moses existed in the flesh. But the words, 'Why do you call me good? None is good but God,' seemed to me very difficult to explain away, and the words spoken on the Cross even more so. Nor is it very clear that Paul believed in the separate Divinity of Christ.

Christ will disappear in the end to be merged into his Father.' 'A puzzling view of Christ's Divinity,' I said, and sat for a long time looking into the fire, thinking how pleasant it would be if Mahaffy were here, we two sitting on either side of the fire, our Bibles on our knees.

It was the next day that my servant told me the Reverend Mahaffy had called. 'Retreat is now out of the question,' I said. 'To-morrow he'll call again; or perhaps he'll wait for me to return his visit, and for me to return it will be more polite. But it is impossible to wait till to-morrow. I must talk the matter out with somebody. Why not with Sir Thornley? Only he is generally occupied with patients at this hour.'

'You know, I've been thinking of joining the Church of Ireland for some time.'

'So I have heard it said, but I thought it was one of your jokes.'

'One doesn't choose such subjects for joking;' and I showed him the Archbishop's letter. 'Now, what is to be done? The Reverend Gilbert Mahaffy called this afternoon, and he'll call to-morrow if I don't return his visit. It will be better, I think, to call upon him this evening and get it over, only I can't think what he'll say to me. Can you give me any idea?'

'He'll ask you if you abjure the errors of Rome.'

'He can't ask that, because I never believed in Rome. Do you think he'll ask me to say a prayer with him?'

Sir Thornley began to laugh, and his laughter shocked me a little, but I did not get up to leave the room until he said:

'Did the Archbishop send you an order for coals and blankets?'

'I wonder how you, who are a Protestant, and respect your religion—— I wonder what your co-religionists——' and without attempting to finish my sentence I walked out of the room abruptly, and opened the hall-door, but had to draw back into the hall, for Gilbert Mahaffy was coming down Hume Street, and, thinking of him in his strenuous, useful life, I came to be ashamed of the disappointment I had experienced when the Archbishop had referred my spiritual needs to him instead of undertaking them himself. 'No man,' I said, 'is more likely to inspire in me the faith I am seeking. . . . After dinner I will call upon him.'

My dinner was hardly tasted that evening, so perturbed was I; and I still can recall the glow behind the houses as I went towards the gateway.

'Is Mr. Mahaffy at home?'

'Yes, sir.'

Portentous words, and the study itself portentous in its simplicity. I had just time to look over the great writing-table covered with papers—'all on parochial business,' I said—before he entered. He came running into the room, his eyes and his hands welcoming me.

'I'm so glad to see you.'

'We have lived near each other for a long time,' I answered, 'and I have often wished to know you, Mr. Mahaffy.'

'Yes; His Grace asked me to call. Yes-s.'

In moments of great mental excitement one notices everything, and Mr. Mahaffy's manner of

saying 'yes-s,' trying to turn the word from a monosyllable to a dissyllable, and his habit of rubbing his hands after the pronunciation, struck me. And very nervously I began to explain that I had written to the Archbishop, saying that since I had come to live in Ireland——

'His Grace sent me your letter—yes-s.'

'You see, Mr. Mahaffy, in England one has no opportunity of noticing the evil influence of the Church of Rome; it wasn't until I came here . . .' It seemed to me that I had better tell him of my great discovery—the illiteracy of Rome since the Reformation. I did—without, however, interesting him very deeply. 'He is more interested in the theological side of the question,' I said to myself, and sought for a transitional phrase, but before finding one Mr. Mahaffy mentioned Newman, and I told him that Newman could hardly write English at all, at which he showed some surprise. 'The Roman Church relies upon its converts, for after two or three generations of Catholicism the intelligence dies.'

It was plain to me that the conversation was not altogether to his taste, and, thinking to interest him, I said:

'You know, Cardinal Manning was of this opinion. He told a friend of mine that he was glad he had been brought up a Protestant.'

'Did he? I didn't know that.'

And, my thoughts running on ahead, I began to describe a new Utopia—a State so well ordered that no one in it was allowed to be a Papist unless he or she could prove some bodily or mental infirmity, or

until he or she had attained a certain age, which put them beyond the business of the world—the age of seventy, perhaps, the earliest at which a conversion would be legal. 'A sort of spiritual Old Age Pension Scheme,' I said; and a picture rose up before my mind of a crowd of young and old, all inferior, physically or intellectually, struggling round the door of a Roman Catholic Church, with papers in their hands, on the first Friday of every month.

'It is quite possible, Mr. Moore, that there is more intelligence in Protestantism than in Catholicism; but the question before us is hardly one of literature. In the letter to His Grace I understood you to say that Christianity is to be found in its purest form in the Anglican Church. We are concerned, really, with spiritual rather than with æsthetic truths.'

'You are quite right. Perhaps I was wrong; but a sense of humour does not preclude sincerity, and many reasons lead one towards spiritual truth. If I introduced æsthetics into our conversation, it was because I have spoken to Catholics on this matter, and they have always, with one exception—a convert—failed to put the case as you did—that religion really has nothing to do with æsthetics.'

The interview had certainly taken an unexpected turn, and an unfortunate one, and while I was thinking of something to say to Dr. Mahaffy, he asked me suddenly if he were to understand that I accepted the Divinity of our Lord?

'Of course I am aware that you accept the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ in a very literal sense, but is it sure that we do not mean the same thing in the end? All things tend towards God,

and what is highest in Nature is nearest to God, and certainly Jesus Christ was the noblest human being in many respects that ever lived.'

A cloud had come into his face, and, seeing that it was deepening, I became more sincere in the sense that I tried to get nearer to the truth.

'I should like to believe as you do, to share your belief.'

'And you will,' he said. 'You will be with us one of these days if you aren't with us wholly to-day,' and we talked on religious subjects until it was time for me to go. Then he asked me to come again; I promised to do so in a few days, and went away asking myself if it were ever likely that I should be able to answer truthfully and say 'Yes, I believe in the Divinity of Christ as you do.' 'I should have to know exactly what he meant, and it is doubtful if he would be able to tell me, for we cannot understand God, and if we cannot understand what God is, how is it that we speak of the Son of God? St. Paul himself had no conception of the Trinity. If Christ were God, equal to his Father, how is it that—what are Paul's words?—Christ will disappear in the end to be merged into his Father? It is all very puzzling.'

A few days after I went again to see Mr. Mahaffy, and I remember telling him that I had been questioning myself on the subject of Christ's Divinity.

'You see, Mr. Mahaffy, one doesn't know what one believes. None of us thinks alike, and no man can tell his soul to another. Is it not sufficient if I say that in my belief there is more Divinity in Christ than in any other human being?'

'You say in your letter to the Archbishop that you wished to join the communion of the Anglican Church, and the belief of that communion is not so vague as yours, Mr. Moore. We believe that Christ is the Son of God, and came into the world to redeem the world from sin, that he died on the Cross and rose three days afterwards from the dead, ascended into Heaven——'

'Tolstoy didn't believe in the physical resurrection, and it may be doubted if St. Paul believed in it; yet you will not deny that Tolstoy was a Christian.'

'He was a Christian, no doubt, but not in the full sense of the word as we understand it.'

'Well, St. Paul. I take my stand upon Paul, Mr. Mahaffy. He seems to have had very little sense of the Trinity. Paul was a Unitarian. The passage in which he says that "Christ will disappear in the end to be merged into his Father. . . ."'

We wrangled about texts for a long time, Mahaffy quoting one, I quoting another, until it seemed impolite for me to press my point further; and accepting him as an authority, I bade him good-night, asking him when I might see him again.

Three days afterwards I was again in the Rectory, and we talked for an hour together and parted on the same terms.

'I shall be in to-morrow evening; will you come to see me?'

I promised I would, and all the time I felt that this evening would not end without his asking me to say a prayer with him. If we could only pray standing up I shouldn't so much mind, I thought;

but prayers are never said standing, and the thought of the prayer haunted my mind all the time I was speaking to him, and when I got up to go the long expected words were spoken.

'Will you say a prayer with me?'

He went down upon his knees, and I repeated the Lord's Prayer after him.

'I have been dreading this prayer all the week, and I could hardly conquer my fear, and at the same time a force behind myself prompted me to you.'

'Let me give you a Prayer-Book,' he said, and I returned home to read it absorbed in a deep emotion. The prayer said with Mr. Mahaffy had come out of my heart, and the memory of it continued to burn, shedding a soft radiance. 'How happy I am! What a blessed peace this is!' I often said. 'My difficulties have melted away. How strange, it no longer seems to matter to me whether the world thinks me Catholic or Protestant; I am with Christ.'

But the storm of life is never over until it ceases for ever, and before a week had gone by a copy of an Irish review came to me, containing a criticism of my book, *The Untilled Field*; 'himself a Catholic' were the words that upset my mental balance, forcing me into an uncontrollable rage. 'Is this shame eternal?' I cried. 'Of what use is writing? I have been writing all my life that I never had hand, act, or part——'

Very little emotion robs me of words, and, with a great storm raging within my breast, I walked about the room, conscious that a great injustice was being

done to me. Merely because my father was a Papist am I to remain one? Despite long protests and practice, not only this paper calls me a Catholic, but Edward, my most intimate friend, calls me one. His words are: 'You are a bad Catholic; but you are a Catholic'; and he persists in those words, though, according to the Catholic Church, I am not one, never having acquiesced in any of its dogmas. He continues to reiterate the shameful accusation—shameful to me, at least. His mind is so stultified in superstitions that he does not remember that those who do not confess and communicate cease to belong to the Roman Church. I believe that to be the rule, and if I remind him of it his face becomes overcast. Any thought of transgression frightens him; but so paralyzed is his mind, that he clings to the base superstition that if a little water is poured on the head of an infant in a Catholic church the child remains a Catholic, just as a child born of black parents remains a nigger, no matter what country he is born in or the nationality he elects. Now I wonder if it be orthodox to hold that a Sacrament confers benefits on the recipient without some co-operation on the part of the recipient? I suppose that is Roman Catholic doctrine; even if the recipient protests the Sacrament overrules his objections. 'We live in a mad world, my masters!' But I think Edward goes a step further than Catholic doctrine warrants him to do. He seems to hold that Catholic baptism confers perpetual Catholicism on the individual. I do his theology a wrong. 'If you aren't a Catholic, why don't you become a Protestant?' he said at Tillyra. I corrected him. 'One doesn't become

a Protestant,' I said; but the correction was wasted. His theological knowledge is slight, but he knows the country—his own phrase, 'I know the country'—and in Ireland one must be one or the other.

A light seemed to break in my mind suddenly; I remembered that the welcome the priests had given Edward VII. when he came to Ireland had not pleased the patriotic Gaelic League, and it occurred to me that I might get a nice revenge for the words 'himself a Catholic' if I were to write to the *Irish Times* declaring that I had passed from the Church of Rome to the Church of Ireland, shocked beyond measure at the lack of patriotism of the Irish priests. 'Nothing will annoy them more, and in writing this I shall not be writing a lie. Magicians I have called them, and with good reason. Their magical powers are as great in politics as in religion, for haven't they persuaded Ireland to accept them as patriots?'

I wrote for an hour, and then went out in search of Æ: it is essential to consult Æ on every matter of importance, and the matter on which I was about to consult him seemed to me of the very highest. The night was Thursday, and every Thursday night after finishing the last pages of *The Homestead*, he goes to the Hermetic Society to teach till eleven o'clock. But the rooms were not known to me, and I must have met a member of the Society who directed me to the house in Dawson Street, a great decaying building let out in rooms, traversed by dusty passages, intersected by innumerable staircases; and through this great ramshackle I wandered, losing myself again and again. The doors were numbered, but the number I sought seemed undiscoverable. At last,

at the end of a short, dusty corridor, I found the number I was seeking, and on opening the door caught sight of Æ among his disciples. He was sitting at a bare table, teaching, and his disciples sat on chairs, circlewise, listening. There was a lamp on the table, and it lit up his ardent, earnest face, and some of the faces of the men and women, others were lost in shadows. He bade me welcome, and continued to teach as if I had not been there. He even appealed to me on one occasion, but the subject was foreign to me, and it was impossible to detach my thoughts from the business on which I had come to speak to him. It seemed as if the disciples would never leave. The last stragglers clung about him, and I wondered why he did not send them away; but Æ never tries to rid himself of anybody, not even the most importunate. At last the door closed, and I was free to tell him that it was impossible for me to bear with this constantly recurring imputation of Catholicism any longer.

'I have written a letter,' I said, 'which should bring it to an end and for ever. But before publishing it I should like to show it to you; it may contain things of which you would not approve.' The pages were spread upon the table, and Æ began to suggest emendations. The phrases I had written would wound many people, and Æ is instinctively against wounding anybody. But his emendations seemed to me to destroy the character of my letter, and I said:

'Æ, I can't accept your alterations. It has come

to me to write this letter. You see, I am speaking out of a profound conviction.'

'Then, my dear Moore, if you feel the necessity of speech as much as that, and the conviction is within you, it is not for me to advise you. You have been advised already.'

END OF VOLUME II

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

00090315

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018